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CELEBRANT SINGERS...the Missions Choice for Musicians!

Nine Inch Nails
"March of the Pigs"
Interscope Records



So you like your music loud and pissed off, huh? And your stereo is still in shambles from the devastation of Mr. Nine Inch Nails himself, Trent Reznor, and his last release, "The Downward Spiral." You thought the worst was over. You are wrong.

"March of the Pigs" is a seven-song EP that was released about a week before "The Downward Spiral," and America's favorite psychotic musician uses those seven cuts to serve as a bridge between his last two EPs, "Broken" and "Fixed," and "The Downward Spiral."

The EP begins with the title cut, "March of the Pigs," and doesn't even slow down to take a breath. It is followed by "Reptilian" and "All the Pigs, All Lined Up"—two great cuts—and finishes with "Underneath the Skin."

Although Reznor has steadily wandered away from the pop sounds that underlined his debut, "Pretty Hate Machine," "March of the Pigs" is not quite as raw as "Broken" or "Fixed." While it still retains that razor's edge in both scaring guitars and vocals, Reznor's voice is a lot smoother and easier to understand. But he's still pissed off.

If you're a die-hard NIN fan or just

someone looking for some good loud music, run to your favorite record store and pick up this EP. Then stand back and watch your speakers explode.

—William Harms



Fury in the Slaughterhouse
"Mono"
Slaughterhouse Music



Life is really sad. You fall out of the womb, roll around in pain and then stumble into a dirty grave. Life is just awful. And if you don't believe me, just listen to "Mono" by Fury in the Slaughterhouse.

"Mono" is melancholy, slow and ponderous to the point of decay. That this German group's album is compelling at all is meritable.

A couple of songs on the album are nearly hummable, like "Every Generation Got Its Own Disease" and "Radio Orchid." The former, in particular, has an inviting anthem quality. It is so infectious that you may find yourself singing "diseases come, diseases go, welcome to the final show."

Or maybe you won't. "Mono" is so pessimistic that it's hard to keep from snickering while listening to it. There's something morbidly funny about a song like "Dead Before I Was Born." The song's lyrics say: "The first thing that I saw was white, the nurse came with scissors and said: it's a boy/ The doctor hit my ass, said come on cry/ and then I started to scream and I was alive/ ooh, ooh, I was dead before I was born."

Try to avoid catching "Mono" if you can.

—Patrick Hambrecht

"Mellow Gold"
Beck
Geffen



Singer-songwriter-guitarist-maniac Beck was in no way a "well-adjusted young man." In fact, Beck has an obsession with the bizarre and has used it to his advantage in his first major release, "Mellow Gold."

This punky, psychedelic, astro-weird collection of musings on sadness and things that go splat in the night make Beck the poster child for the North American domestic slacker.

With its almost "Teen Spirit"-ish aura, Beck's greatest rage, "Loser," drones on and on and on. It leaves an intense desire to find those scholarship applications and actually fill them out this time.

The whole compilation has that

sickening sugar-sweet gore to it. But, hey, that's cool. Everybody needs to know that somebody out there is having a more cynically dorky life than they are.

One part in "Steal My Body Home" sounds like a bunch of dying cats in the back of a Buick on a hot, summer day in Arizona. This, complimented by Beck's deathbed mutterings, is a sharp look into the reality of being stuck in a hole, where the only thing left to do is make friends with the earthworms.

Beck seems to be sitting on a cloud, laughing at those who think everything is so self-important that you can't make fun of it.

This is the last compact disc to give to someone who either (a) was recently dumped/evicted/shot/hit by a moving semi or (b) likes Bobby McFerrin.

You can almost hear the smirk on Beck's face as he sings anthems to everything ugly and inane. He uses lyrics like "tofu the size of Texas" and "time is a piece of wax falling on a termite who's choking on the splinters."

Beck looks around the room for something to write a song about—from cat litter to coffee pots, manure and morgues. This occurs all the way to the surprise "Space Invaders" ending of whirling noises and beeps.

Life in hell playing Scrabble and eating S'mores show up on Beck's high point album "Mellow Gold." He mocks everything under the sun that seeps through the ozone and fries everyone to little crispies.

—Paula Lavigne

"The Very Crystal Speed Machine"
Thee Hypnotics
American Recordings



The mesmerizing sound of Thee Hypnotics encourages the listener to sway back and forth like a gold watch on a chain.

Since this British band made its American debut in 1990, it has struggled to match the success it found in England. Its latest effort may be just what it needs to break into the U.S. music scene.

On its latest album, "The Very Crystal Speed Machine," the band uses a lot of intense instrumentation that is tightly held together by the diverse vocals of lead singer James Jones.

The stylistic changes on the album demonstrate the strengths of this band. Ranging from the bluesy elements of "If the Good Lord Loves Ya" to the darker side of "Down in the Hole," the band's almost-live sound fluctuates splendidly.

The danceable percussion of "Keep Rollin' On" and "Phil's Drum Acropolis" contrasts well with the heavier, Zeppelinesque sounds of "Heavy Liquid" and "Look What You've Done."

The band also shows its mellow side with the piano-based tunes "Caroline Inside Out" and "Peasant Song."

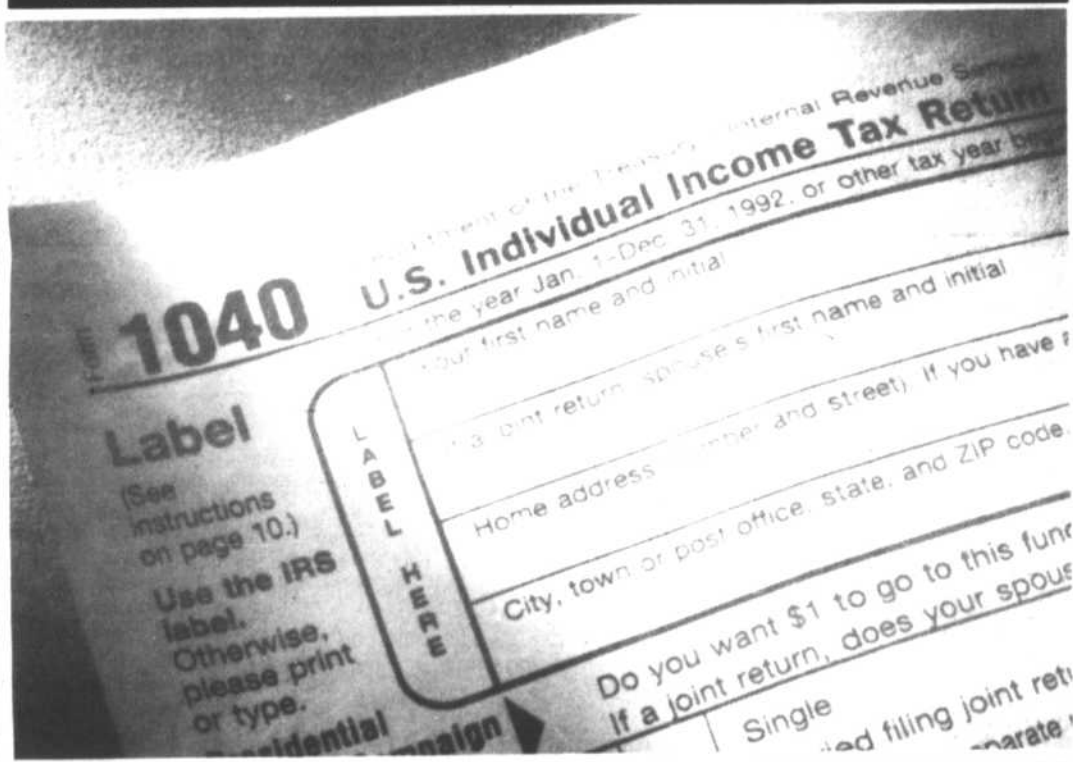
And just to throw everybody off, it tosses in a marvelously eccentric song, "Ray's Baudelaire."

"The Very Crystal Speed Machine" is a wondrous cacophony of songs that gives any music lover a variety of sounds.

Just a suggestion: Check out Thee Hypnotics.

—Joel Strauch

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