

**Nine Inch Nails**  
**"The Day The World Went Away"**  
 (single)  
**Nothing/Interscope**  
**Grade: B+**

Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. That's what you'll get, a hodgepodge of material, on "The Day The World Went Away," the first new single from Nine Inch Nails in over two years.

A week ago, the single hit airwaves at radio stations across the nation. NIN fans were struggling to even get a piss-poor recording to send across the Internet to folks whose radio stations hadn't yet got the single.

All through the Internet, sites popped up with the track in MP3 file format, only to vanish a few hours later. Reports of "NINCop" asking people to remove the track ran rampant.

Then, Tuesday, the single was finally released. In an ironic twist, on the day that "The Day The World Went Away" appeared in stores, the official website ... went away.

WWW.NIN.com shut down early that morning and stayed gone for a day before reappearing. Now, the site asks for a username, password, email address and zipcode. No one knows what this is for and speculation is running wild.

Nothing Records, Nine Inch Nails'

mastermind Trent Reznor's record label, has said that riddles abound in the dates that the single's been released, the coming and going of the website and it's starting to seem like Reznor's gone Riddler.

(Riddle me this, Reznor, how much longer do we have to wait for "The Fragile," the new album?)

Reznor is Nine Inch Nails, though, so he's allowed to toy with us all he likes, even though the waiting is driving many NIN fans crazy. It was 1994 when the last NIN album, "The Downward Spiral" was released and 1997 when the last NIN song, "The Perfect Drug" was released.

But now the single is out and the album is on the way. (We hope.)

The question remains: Is the single any good?

Oh, hell yes.

There are three tracks on the single (which is selling for about \$3.50 at most places) and they really are about as diverse as possible.

#### SOMETHING NEW

"The Day The World Went Away" was not what most people were expecting the new Nine Inch Nails to sound like.

It has no drums.

The guitars are thick, fuzzed and layered alternating with very quiet, almost whispered vocals. In many ways,

the track seems more like something that would have come from shoegazer bands like My Bloody Valentine or The Jesus And Mary Chain than from the man who told us what he wanted to do to us like an animal.

Again, there are no drums.

"The Day The World Went Away" is also a very relaxed track. It has a brooding intensity to it, but it never really grabs for the throat. In some ways, that makes the track oh so much better.

If anything, the song sounds like a track from his "broken" EP that's been slowed down to a third of the speed. It could also be Reznor's attempt to make an anthem for the maniacally depressed of the world.

"I listen to the words he'd say/ But in his voice, I heard decay/ A plastic face forced to portray/ All the insides left cold and grey/ There is a place that still remains/ It eats the fear, it eats the pain/ The sweetest price you'll have to pay/ The day the whole world went away."

Talk about bleak.

Instead of anger, there's a sense of weary despair, and perhaps even a little strength drawn from the despair. It's almost as though Reznor has learned it's his pain and anger he feeds off of, but just because he feeds from them doesn't mean that's all he is.

Regardless, it's a very conscious

definitive change for Reznor and a very welcome one. Like most artists, they reach a point where they want to make a big jump from their past. Inevitably, these artists either make a flop of a record or an incredibly great one. If the rest of the record is as experimental and risky as this (which Reznor has claimed), "The Fragile" promises to be one hell of a record.

#### SOMETHING OLD

Never let it be said, however, that Reznor wanted to make a complete break.

The b-side to the single is "Starf\*\*\*ers Inc." and sounds like it was lifted straight from the same recording session that produced the "broken" EP, and the subsequent "fixed" remix EP.

Here, there are definitely drums.

The track is a collaboration between Reznor and remixer Charlie Clouser who has done a couple of NIN remixes before.

With the b-side, Reznor kicks the adrenaline back in and pumps out a pulsing, racing track that is going to be incredible to hear live.

The guitars here have that "broken" buzz to them and the vocals have been toyed with that reminisces to the very broken vocals on several of the "fixed" tracks.

Part of what's really nice about this track, however, is all the little background sounds that include squeaking guitars and swirling synths. At some points, the sound even feels like the song "Sin" off NIN's first album, "Pretty Hate Machine."

The lyrics to "Starf\*\*\*ers Inc." are brutal and the music incredibly in your face.

**SOMETHING BORROWED**  
 "Starf\*\*\*ers Inc." has a couple of things that aren't so original, though.

At one point in the song, Reznor comes across as a demented Carly Simon, bellowing out "You're so vain. I bet you think this song is about you. Don't you? Don't you? DON'T YOU!?" While it does work within the song, the first time, I think everyone shook their head.

There are also elements of KISS's "Shout Out Loud" worked in at the very end of the song.

In many ways, it's fairly obvious that "Starf\*\*\*ers Inc." is a reference to protégé-gone-bad Marilyn Manson, whom Reznor had a falling out with not too long ago.

The fact that Reznor incorporated a bit from KISS, another band in makeup, only helps to further that suspicion.

#### SOMETHING BLUE

To close out the single, Reznor included the "quiet" version of "The Day The World Went Away."

It opens with a wordless singing that sounds eerily similar to Pink Floyd's "Another Brick In The Wall Pt. II," but then continues with piano and background guitars so far in the distance that they sound like crackling electricity.

True to his word, it is a very quiet rendition of the single and invokes memories of "Something I Can Never Have" from "Pretty Hate Machine."

All in all, the single bodes incredibly well for "The Fragile." Expectations are running very, very high and the two-disc album is expected within the next few months. It certainly won't be for everyone, but it has all the potential to be phenomenal.

-Cliff Hicks

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**Luscious Jackson**  
**"Electric Honey"**  
**Grand Royal/Capitol Records**  
**Grade: B+**

Luscious Jackson have scored more breaks than most bands. They were recognized by the Beastie Boys and were signed to their label. For their second full-length album, U2 producer Daniel Lanois manned the control boards.

Now, for their third album, "Electric Honey," they nab mix master Andy Wallace, the producer who gave Slayer and Nirvana an oil-slick sheen to some of their best works. They also scored a killer guest vocalist by enlisting the help of Deborah Harry.

All of this wouldn't make a bit of difference if Luscious Jackson didn't have the talents to back up their studio help. And "Electric Honey" is their most consistently enjoyable album to date.

Like "Fever In, Fever Out," their last album, the band opens with a song that dares you not to hit the 'replay' button on your player. But instead of "Naked Eye," the listener is treated to the bouncy, "Electric Breakthrough." While many artists are rushing to incorporate rap into their musical arsenal, in Luscious Jackson's case, the rap elements seem natural and not novelty. The rap elements fit perfectly midway through "Nervous Breakthrough," giving

it a deep groove to coincide with the airy funkiness of the opening beat.

Though the band has been scaled down to a trio (keyboardist Vivian Trimble left the band), they actually sound more unified and confident on this outing.

Songs like "Alien Lover" and "Sexy Hypnotist" give the listener a good indication that "Electric Honey" is meant to be enjoyed and not analyzed to death. Sure, the titles are silly, but the band's fluid as water delivery is so intoxicating, you don't care if you can decipher the lyrics.

Like "Fever In, Fever Out," the band loses some steam towards the end of the album. A trio of songs, "Fantastic Fabulous," "Gypsy" and "Beloved" tend sound like they're three parts of a very long song.

Still, it's a relief that Luscious Jackson released this in the middle of the summer. Like their label mates album, "Hello Nasty," "Electric Honey" succeeds both at making a cerebral work and at making a great summer album: an album meant to listen to while driving around with the windows down on a humid day. And unlike such other summer fluff (basically anything off the Billboard Top 10 right about now), you don't feel like you need a cavity filled after listening to this sweet release.

-Sean McCarthy