

Wooooah, there. In the last few hours, I have had worries that the following band I'm about to talk about, Nitzer Ebb, may have been nazi. That was because after doing some light research, I discovered that the Warsaw Ghetto (one of the group's song titles) was a Jewish segregated area in the second world war. Panic, panic, panic, I couldn't post a review about racists, obviously. Both for reputation and ethical reasons. Damn, all that work wasted, I thought. However, the song seems to be about Jews pulling together at the time, which is surely harmless, even positive. (Here are the lyrics I'm referring to 'these brutal friendships last, they rule and they last'). And of course Depeche Mode apparently liked Nitzer's music. Do you think they would want anything to do with nazis? Phew. So let's get this thing finished and posted. Don't worry, I haven't turned bad!

Here we go!... Nitzer Ebb are a strange collective. With them in their debut album 'That Total Age', (originally released on vinyl) you get simple drum beats, repetitive synth bass lines and I guess an MC going 'oh!' somewhat more frequently than you're probably used to. That's pretty much all. Sound good? It kind of is! I was being very unfair, the 'singer' also goes 'ah!', 'oo!', 'argh!', etc. along with chanting actual words and with the help of delay, it sounds great, it really does. When he (I guess again) MCs true lyrics, I'm not 100% sure what he's going on about, though.

For example in the song 'Join in the Chant', he says 'lies, lies, lies, lies, gold, gold, gold, gold, guns, guns, guns, guns, fire, fire, fire, oh!' Those words could mean anything from robbing a lying jeweller, (a valid theory, please don't laugh) to shooting a liar with a golden gun. A James Bond fan, it seems. Ok, I'm exaggerating for comic effect again - the JitC song also features the words 'church' and the phrase 'muscle and hate!' a lot. Does that help you with trying to decipher its meaning? That's what I thought. I guess the words are open to interpretation. However, if the band are so apparently arty and thought provoking, why the hell is the backing music so moronic??

Apparently the CD version of this release (the one I own) doesn't have the song 'Warsaw Ghetto' (not racist) on it, like the record does. It's not known why. However, I have a theory: It's because it's rubbish. Only joking, but where are all the 'ohs!?' You can't just omit them like that. Sure you get a few 'ows' but they're not the same. They are half the reason I keep coming back to the music. Again for whatever reason, the CD version has three 'bonus' tunes in it that are remixes of the songs heard earlier on. They basically sound exactly the same for the most part, so once again I am thinking 'why?' To be fair one of the remixes is a contrasting instrumental version, but for the third time, I really like the MC going 'oh!' on the original, so that particular bonus track is actually worse.

Moving on, according to Wikipedia, Nitzer Ebb have a habit of replacing their drummers. Again, no reason is given as to why. Are the drum parts too difficult to play for them? Was the pressure too much? I hope not, they're not exactly complicated as explained earlier. Well, maybe the drummers left because they were bored. That's more likely. Even worse, maybe they didn't know what the singer was going on about in Join in the Chant, they thought too much about it, and in a state of fatigue induced paranoia, they came to the conclusion the singer was a hardened criminal. THAT would be a high pressure environment. 'Nitzer Ebb break into Fort Knox' the newspapers would say. Eternal infamy. Not good.

That's all I have to say, really. So, what rating do I give the album? A perfectly respectable 7/10. Pretty good as there is pretty much no melody in it. Another strength of the music is the way it's so easy to get into. That's mostly because there's f**k all to memorise, but in the band's defence, countless other minimalist acts out there simply sound boring. So for the final time, well done Nitzer Ebb, you band of weirdos. Or as you may put it, 'well done, well done, well done, well done, muscle and hate, oh!'