

= Ghosts I ? IV =

Ghosts I ? IV is the sixth studio album by American industrial rock band Nine Inch Nails , released on March 2 , 2008 . The team behind the project included Nine Inch Nails front man Trent Reznor , studio @-@ collaborators Atticus Ross and Alan Moulder , and instrumental contributions from Alessandro Cortini , Adrian Belew , and Brian Viglione . Reznor described the music of Ghosts as " a soundtrack for daydreams " , a sentiment echoed by many critics who compared it with the work of Brian Eno and Robert Fripp . The songs are unnamed , and are identified only by their track listing and group number .

The album is the first independent release from Nine Inch Nails following its split from Interscope Records , and is an almost entirely instrumental album . Ghosts was initially intended to be a five @-@ track EP , but the final release consists of four nine @-@ track EPs , totaling 36 tracks . The album was released under a Creative Commons license (BY @-@ NC @-@ SA) , and in a variety of differing packages and price points , including a US \$ 300 " Ultra @-@ Deluxe Limited Edition " . Ghosts was initially released digitally on the official Nine Inch Nails website without any prior advertisement or promotion . Via the official Nine Inch Nails YouTube profile , a user @-@ generated " film festival " was announced , where fans were invited to visually interpret the album 's music and post their results .

Critical reception of the album has been generally favorable , with its unorthodox release attracting positive comments from many critics . Much coverage of Ghosts I ? IV has compared it to the digital @-@ download releases of Radiohead 's In Rainbows as well as Saul Williams ' The Inevitable Rise and Liberation of NiggyTardust ! , the latter produced by Reznor himself . The album was nominated for two 2008 Grammy Awards , in the categories " Best Rock Instrumental Performance " and " Best Box Set or Limited Edition Package " . These nominations represented the first time music released under a Creative Commons license had been nominated for a Grammy Award .

= = Production = =

= = = Recording and music = = =

Nine Inch Nails front man Trent Reznor announced in 2007 that the band had completed its contractual obligations to its record label , Interscope Records , and would no longer be working with the company . He also revealed that the band would likely distribute its next album independently , possibly in a fashion similar to Saul Williams ' 2007 album The Inevitable Rise and Liberation of NiggyTardust ! , which Reznor produced .

Following the Performance 2007 tour in support of the band 's previous album Year Zero (2007) , Reznor set out to make a record " with very little forethought " . Ghosts I ? IV originated from an experiment : " The rules were as follows : 10 weeks , no clear agenda , no overthinking , everything driven by impulse . Whatever happens during that time gets released as ... something . " Reznor explained , " I 've been considering and wanting to make this kind of record for years , but by its very nature it wouldn 't have made sense until this point " .

The core creative team behind the project was Reznor , Atticus Ross , and Alan Moulder . Live @-@ band member Alessandro Cortini and studio musicians Adrian Belew and Brian Viglione also contributed instrumental performances on select tracks . Reznor described the band 's early intentions for the project as " an experiment " , and explained the group 's process : " When we started working with the music , we would generally start with a sort of visual reference that we had imagined : a place , or a setting , or a situation . And then attempt to describe that with sound and texture and melody . And treat it , in a sense , as if it were a soundtrack . "

The musicians created the album tracks through improvisation and experimentation . As a result , the initial plan to release a single EP of the material expanded to include the increasing amount of material . Viglione contributed percussion to tracks 19 and 22 . He stated that Reznor 's instructions to him were to " build a drumkit . Piece together any stuff that you want to bang on ; rent what you

want to rent . Have fun and ... be creative ? See where your mind and your ideas take you . " Viglione 's makeshift drum kit included a 50 @-@ gallon trash can , a pair of water cooler jugs , and a cookie tray with a chain across it . Alessandro Cortini is credited on a total of ten tracks from Ghosts for his contributions on guitar , bass guitar , dulcimer , and electronics . Cortini was brought onto the project two weeks into the process , and his involvement evolved from " first recording some extra parts to some tracks " and eventually into " a collaboration on [the] tracks noted in the booklet " . Adrian Belew was also brought on for select instrumental contributions , but as the project evolved Reznor expanded Belew 's involvement and shared writing credit with him on two tracks .

Ghosts I ? IV is an almost entirely instrumental album , with only a few tracks containing sampled vocals . Reznor described the album 's sound as " the result of working from a very visual perspective ? dressing imagined locations and scenarios with sound and texture ; a soundtrack for daydreams . " PopMatters ' review of the album compared its musical style to that of Brian Eno and Robert Fripp , ultimately categorizing it as " dark ambient " . The review went on to describe the music as " a tonal painting , a collection of moods and not all of these moods are good ones . " National Public Radio compared the album to the music of Erik Satie and Brian Eno ; Rolling Stone 's review to Brian Eno , specifically the album 's sound to the instrumentals of Another Green World (1975) and the rhythm collages of My Life in the Bush of Ghosts (1981) . Robert Christgau also compared the album to the work of Brian Eno , summarizing Ghosts ' sound as " mental wallpaper "

Ghosts I ? IV features a wide assortment of musical instruments , including piano , guitar , bass , synthesizer , marimba , tambourine , banjo , dulcimer , and xylophone , many of which were sampled and distorted electronically . Percussion instruments , contributed primarily by Brian Viglione , were constructed largely out of found objects and household items .

= = = Artwork = = =

Rob Sheridan acted as the album 's art director , in collaboration with Artist in Residence . Sheridan was also art director for the previous two Nine Inch Nails studio albums , With Teeth (2005) and Year Zero . Since Ghosts was released in a variety of versions , some of the versions feature somewhat differing (or additional) album art and related artwork . A 40 @-@ page PDF comes with each version of the album and contains a photograph for each of the 36 tracks . These photographs are also embedded into the ID3 tags of every downloadable track .

= = Release = =

Ghosts I ? IV was released online on March 2 , 2008 , on the official Nine Inch Nails website in a number of different formats at various price points . The only prior advertisement or notice of the release was a post by Reznor two weeks prior on the site saying " 2 weeks ! " Ghosts was the first album released by Reznor 's independent label The Null Corporation . Retail copies of the album were distributed by RED Distribution on April 8 on CD and vinyl formats , and May 1 for the " Deluxe " and " Ultra @-@ Deluxe " editions . The smallest Ghosts package contains the first nine tracks , available for free online from either the official Nine Inch Nails website or officially from various BitTorrent trackers , including The Pirate Bay . The entire album was also made available for download directly from the band for US \$ 5 . Physical copies of the album were available for pre @-@ sale online , with immediate access to the digital version . A two @-@ disc version includes two audio CDs and a 16 @-@ page booklet for \$ 10 . A " Deluxe Edition " is available for \$ 75 and includes two audio CDs , a data @-@ DVD containing multitrack files of the album , a Blu @-@ ray Disc with the album in high @-@ definition stereo and accompanying slide show , and a 48 @-@ page hardcover book with photographs . A \$ 300 " Ultra @-@ Deluxe Limited Edition " included everything in the " Deluxe " edition , as well as a 4 @-@ LP 180 gram vinyl set in a fabric slipcase , and two exclusive limited edition Giclée prints , unique to each copy . These were limited to 2 @,@ 500 pieces , each copy numbered and signed by Trent Reznor . Reznor described the limited edition release as " the most luxurious physical package we 've ever created . " Finally , the album was also

released on 4 @-@ LP 130 gram vinyl , set in a double gate fold package , for \$ 39 .

The album is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non @-@ Commercial Share Alike license , in effect allowing anyone to use or rework the material for any non @-@ profit purpose , as long as credit is provided and the resulting work is released under a similar license . Reznor explained this move by saying " It 's a stance we 're taking that we feel is appropriate [...] with digital technology , and outdated copyright laws , and all the nonsense that 's going on these days " . Jim Guerinot , then manager of Nine Inch Nails , explained the unconventional release of the album as " [not] a reaction to what doesn 't exist today . [...] it 's more just like , ' Hey , in a vacuum I can do whatever I want to do . ' " The digital @-@ release of the album reportedly required an extensive overhaul of the Nine Inch Nails website in order for the site to cope with the influx of traffic , online @-@ payments , and customer service needs of releasing the album . These upgrades cost Reznor approximately \$ 20 @,@ 000 to implement . Despite these measures , upon the release of Ghosts the site crashed , and additional servers were necessary to handle the traffic .

Reznor wrote in 2008 that " more volumes of Ghosts are likely to appear in the future . " In a 2009 interview with Trent Vanegas , he repeated his intention to make another Ghosts album in the near future . Portions of the album were used as the soundtrack to the 2014 documentary film Citizenfour .

= = = Film festival = = =

Nearly two weeks after the release of the album , Reznor organized and announced a user @-@ created " film festival " as an accompaniment to the album , hosted at the official Nine Inch Nails YouTube channel . It was revealed that the album was stripped of much artwork and song titles to provide a blank canvas for the project . Reznor explained that the endeavor was not meant as a contest , but as " an experiment in collaboration and a chance for us to interact beyond the typical one @-@ way artist @-@ to @-@ fan relationship . " Over 2 @,@ 000 video submissions were posted and over 13 @,@ 000 members joined the festival group , which started in March 2008 .

= = = Live performances = = =

Ghosts I ? IV material was implemented into Nine Inch Nails live performances typically as a distinct section of instrumental songs mid @-@ way through the show . Ghosts material was performed in this manner primarily as part of the Lights in the Sky tour in 2008 , immediately after the album 's release . During these segments the music was largely acoustic , as opposed to the electric instrumentation of other Nine Inch Nails live sets . The Ghosts segment included instrumentation from a marimba , harmonium , glockenspiel , double bass , banjo and various homemade percussion instruments . The Ghosts section was later scrapped for the " NINJA " and " Wave Goodbye " tours , as Reznor felt the instrumental songs did not fit with the set lists .

= = Reception = =

= = = Sales and chart performance = = =

The album 's initial release on the official Nine Inch Nails website suffered problems as the website was inundated with traffic , and was not fully operational until extra servers were added to handle the influx of downloads . A week after the album 's release , the official Nine Inch Nails site reported over 750 @,@ 000 purchase and download transactions , amassing over \$ 1 @.@ 6 million in sales . Pre @-@ orders of the \$ 300 " Ultra @-@ Deluxe Limited Edition " sold out in less than 30 hours of its release . Ghosts I ? IV was the fourth most played album of 2008 on Last.fm , and was the best @-@ selling album on Amazon MP3 .

The physical release of the album placed on numerous charts worldwide , including a peak position of number 14 on the Billboard 200 album chart . The album also reached the top spot on Billboard 's

Dance / Electronic Albums chart . Internationally , Ghosts peaked at number 15 on the Australian ARIA Charts , number 58 in Austria , number 3 in Canada , number 26 in New Zealand , and number 60 on the UK Albums Chart .

== Critical reception ==

Critical response to Ghosts I ? IV was generally favorable , with an average rating of 69 / 100 based on 12 reviews on Metacritic . Seth Colter Walls of Newsweek described the album as " the kind of absorbing musical experience that the surviving ranks of know @-@ it @-@ all record @-@ store clerks would be pushing on customers , if only they could offer it for sale . " IGN gave the album a rating of 8 @.@ 7 out of 10 and wrote , " The music is so engrossing and encompassing that time ceases to be a factor ? at least until the music finally stops . " PopMatters gave the album an 8 out of 10 and described the album as " 36 tracks , but no songs " , and went on to call it " dark , brooding [...] haunting . " Pitchfork Media criticized the album by saying " nearly every one of the untitled instrumental sketches here feels emaciated and half @-@ finished " , and gave the work a 5 @.@ 0 out of 10 @.@ 0 . Blender also criticized the album , summarizing the review by saying " Nine Inch Nails return with no label oversight , no boundaries and no tunes . " The Washington Post stated , " There 's too much here . Yet it 's the most interesting NIN in years . " The review went on to describe each track as " the sonic equivalent of a silver orb hovering in your living room [which then] explodes into a million shiny balls of mercury that splash to the floor before trickling , magnetically , back into a large round mass . "

The album 's unorthodox distribution methods also garnered the attention of various news agencies , such as Wired 's Eliot Van Buskirk , who labeled Ghosts as " a remarkably extensive release " . Ben Worthen of The Wall Street Journal hypothesized that " most business execs [...] could learn a lot from [Reznor 's] experiments with online business models . " Many news agencies compared the release to Radiohead 's 2007 " pay what you want " digital release of In Rainbows , as well as the similar release of Saul Williams ' album The Inevitable Rise and Liberation of NiggyTardust ! the same year , which Reznor produced . Rolling Stone 's review called the album a " a new @-@ media showpiece " , while Tiny Mix Tapes said " the circumstances surrounding the release are so forward @-@ thinking that they could be considered just as key to appreciating the album as the music itself . " Financial website The Motley Fool wrote an article on the album 's release titled " Music Industry Gets Nailed Again " , forecasting that " Innovators like Nine Inch Nails are paving the way for new media business models that may bypass the middleman while making sure artists and fans are happy . " In its review of The Slip , however , PopMatters described Ghosts I ? IV in retrospect as an " aimless batch of ... instrumentals packaged in a brilliant marketing scheme " and said that it was " basically a CD release with a couple of mail @-@ order special editions available for the ' true fans ' . "

== Awards and recognitions ==

Ghosts was nominated for two Grammy Awards , under the categories Best Rock Instrumental performance for the track " 34 Ghosts IV " , and Best Boxed Set or Limited Edition Package for the " Ultra @-@ Deluxe " edition of the album . These nominations represented the first time music licensed under Creative Commons had been nominated for a Grammy Award . Following the release of Ghosts and the similar online release method of the band 's follow @-@ up , The Slip , Reznor was awarded the Webby Artist of the Year Award at the annual Webby Awards in 2009 . Rolling Stone magazine named Reznor number 46 in its " 100 People Who Are Changing America " list , concluding that he has " been more creative than anyone in embracing the post @-@ CD era " .

== Track listing ==

All songs written and composed by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross , except where noted .

== Bonus tracks ==

Included with the " Deluxe " and " Ultra @-@ Deluxe " releases were two additional bonus tracks , accessible only by reconstructing them from multi @-@ track files provided on the DVD . The second bonus track features musical elements and a similar song structure to " Demon Seed " , track 10 from what would be the next Nine Inch Nails release , The Slip .

== Personnel ==

Album credits as adapted from the liner notes of Ghosts I ? IV :

Trent Reznor ? performance , production , art direction

Atticus Ross ? programming , arranging , production

Adrian Belew ? guitars (3 , 4 , 7 , 10 ? 11 , 14 , 16 , 21 , 25 , 27 , 31 , 32 , 35) , electronics (25) , marimba (30)

Alessandro Cortini ? bass (4) , guitars (4 , 11 , 17 , 20 , 24 , 28) , dulcimer (22) , additional electronics (19 , 22 , 29 , 33)

Brian Viglione ? drums (19 , 22)

Alan Moulder ? engineering , mix engineering , production

Tom Baker ? mastering

Rob Sheridan ? art direction , photography , visual and physical elements

Artist in Residence ? art direction , photography , visual and physical elements

Phillip Graybill ? photography

Tamar Levine ? additional photography

== Chart positions ==