

= Nihil =

Nihil is the eighth studio album by industrial rock group KMFDM , released on April 4 , 1995 on Wax Trax ! / TVT . Nihil was recorded in 1994 in Seattle , Washington , and featured the return of former band member Raymond Watts and the first appearance of journeyman drummer Bill Rieflin . The album was mostly written by band leader Sascha Konietzko , who emphasized a less guitar @-@ driven sound for the release . Nihil 's first single , " Juke Joint Jezebel " , is the band 's most widely known song of all time , with millions of copies sold over various releases . Widely praised by critics , Nihil is one of the band 's best @-@ selling albums . After the original release went out of print , a remastered version was released in 2007 .

= = Background = =

In late 1993 , Sascha Konietzko and fellow multi @-@ instrumentalist En Esch both left Chicago , moving to Seattle and New Orleans , respectively . Lead guitarist Günter Schulz left the country , moving to Kelowna , British Columbia . In early 1994 , Konietzko started working on new material , and Schulz came to Seattle to begin adding guitars to the tracks . Later that year , the group assembled in Los Angeles to rehearse for the upcoming Angstfest tour in support of Angst , which spanned April and May . Konietzko , Schulz , Esch , and guitarist Mark Durante were joined by another guitarist , Mike Jensen , for a live show that featured up to four guitarists playing at once . Konietzko and Schulz , along with Dutch singer Dorona Alberti , returned to Seattle to begin recording vocals for Nihil . Konietzko later said he was not happy with the sessions , explaining that nothing was coming together , and only two songs from the upcoming album , " Trust " and " Brute " , had been completed to his satisfaction .

Former KMFDM member Raymond Watts , last seen contributing vocals , programming , and production to 1988 's Don 't Blow Your Top before starting his own band , Pig , called Konietzko and asked if he would be interested in working on a small musical collaboration . Konietzko agreed , and Watts flew to Seattle , where the pair , along with Schulz , worked on an EP entitled Sin Sex & Salvation . Konietzko said of the trio 's working together , " It was the breath of fresh air I had been hoping and waiting for . This short project took my mind off the problems with the KMFDM album and gave me a welcome change of perspective . " Watts then stayed on with the group to begin work on Nihil , which featured a core group of Konietzko , Schulz , Watts , and Esch , along with some input from steel guitar specialist Durante and drummer Bill Rieflin .

= = Production = =

Discussing the change in songwriting from Angst , Konietzko said : " I wasn 't comfortable with the band scenario on that album , where everybody had input . It allowed for too many compromises . Angst seems not organic to me . " In another interview , he explained : " Contrary to the past , I wrote all the songs for Nihil , " adding that doing things that way caused " minimal problems " .

Konietzko stated that the band overused guitars on their previous album , Angst , saying it sounded " like guitarists jacking off " . On Nihil , the guitars were mixed in last . Durante had recently purchased a triple @-@ neck Fender steel guitar in Houston , and used it during recording sessions , but added a significant amount of distortion to it , making it sound like a " regular " guitar but giving it what he called a " sliding " sound . Konietzko also brought in a trio of horn players to perform on " Disobedience " , saying he had always wanted a horn section in a KMFDM song , but that he had never been able to afford it before .

Konietzko originally wrote thirty songs over a period of eight or nine months for Nihil before settling on ten final tracks . Watts came into the studio after the songs were mostly complete and added lyrics to a handful of songs , which he said was " actually quite liberating " in contrast to writing his own music from scratch . Konietzko described the album as being entirely foreplay , without any resolution , and said it was the band 's best album to date , a statement he believed he would be standing by for years . He also said its poppier sound was more his style . Konietzko produced the

album with sound engineer Chris Shepard , who had also engineered the band 's previous album .

= = Release = =

Nihil was originally released on April 4 , 1995 . A digitally remastered re @-@ release of Nihil was released on March 6 , 2007 , along with a similar re @-@ release of KMFDM 's 1996 album Xtort . The band toured twice in 1995 in support of the album , first doing the Beat by Beat tour shortly after the album 's release , and then the In Your Face tour later in the year . The album , which had " major buzz " , had an initial shipment of 75 @,@ 000 copies .

The song 's first track , " Ultra " , was featured in the U.S. release of Street Fighter II : The Animated Movie , and was the theme song for Manga Entertainment 's anime catalog trailer . " Juke Joint Jezebel " , the band 's biggest hit , was featured in the film Bad Boys and in an episode of Beverly Hills 90210 . " Juke Joint Jezebel ( Metropolis Mix ) " was featured in the film Mortal Kombat . The video for " Juke Joint Jezebel " includes footage from the Patlabor 1 manga movie . More than two million copies of the song sold in 1995 alone . KMFDM went on two tours , Beat by Beat and In Your Face , in support of the album in 1995 .

Nihil is one of only two KMFDM studio albums ( Opium being the other ) that does not feature cover artwork by pop @-@ artist Brute ! . Instead , the cover was designed by Rieflin 's wife Francesca Sundsten . The band would return to using Brute ! ' s work on the next album , Xtort . The text which reads " Nihil " was changed from white to green on the album 's 2007 remastered reissue .

= = Critical reception = =

Nihil received very favorable reviews from music critics . Heidi MacDonald of CMJ New Music Monthly called Nihil " a superb album that takes no prisoners from beginning to end , " saying that the first three tracks are " nearly flawless " and calling " Disobedience " a " real standout . " Andy Hinds of AllMusic also praised the album , calling " Juke @-@ Joint Jezebel " " an enduring and indispensable dancefloor favorite at goth / industrial clubs around the world . " He further said that the production on Nihil was " state of the art " and that KMFDM 's sound was " quite polished and tight . " Mark Jenkins of the Washington Post said the album " manages to stay fresh through the use of assorted sonic spices , " adding that the album has " some canny accents . "

Keyboard praised the album , describing " milky organ pads " on " Disobedience " and " snarling guitars [ wrapped ] in spiky synth barbed wire " on " Juke Joint Jezebel " , and saying of band leader Konietzko , " You won 't find a more imaginative or effective keyboardist on the hard @-@ core scene . " Chris Gill of Guitar Player , conversely , said " the most interesting parts are Durante 's steel guitar lines , which howl like revving engines " . Greg Kot of the Chicago Tribune said that " Juke Joint Jezebel " " swaggers like a Bourbon Street hooker , with crunching guitars and a swooping , gospelish chorus " at the time of the album 's release , and in 2011 , said the album put " a polished pop spin on industrial 's characteristic harshness " . Gill had similar praise , saying " few have succeeded in making the combination [ of techno rhythms and thrash guitars ] sound as natural as this " .

Nihil was Wax Trax ! ' s best @-@ selling album to date by the end of 1995 , and went on to sell over 120 @,@ 000 copies by August 1996 . Nihil reached No. 16 on the Billboard Heatseekers chart , and was later labelled one of Wax Trax ! ' s commercial high points .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

All information from 1995 release booklet except where noted .

= = Musicians = =

Sascha Konietzko ? synthesizers , vocals ( 1 ? 7 , 9 ? 10 ) , bass ( 6 ) , drums ( 10 ) , production , mixing

Günter Schulz ? guitars , vocals ( 2 , 6 ) , bass ( 5 ) , pre @-@ production

En Esch ? vocals ( 1 ? 3 , 5 ? 8 ) , guitar ( 1 , 3 , 6 ) , drums ( 6 , 9 ) , hi hat ( 2 ) , cymbals ( 3 ) , backing vocals ( 3 , 5 ) , harmonica ( 5 )

Raymond Watts ? vocals ( 1 ? 3 , 5 , 7 , 9 ) , bass ( 5 ) , drum programming ( 5 )

Mark Durante ? steel guitar ( 1 , 7 ) , guitars ( 5 , 7 , 9 )

= = = = Additional personnel = = = =

Dorona Alberti ? vocals ( 4 , 8 , 10 )

Jim Christiansen ? trombone ( 7 )

Jennifer Ginsberg ? vocals ( 2 )

Jeff Olson ? trumpet ( 7 )

Bill Rieflin ? drums ( 1 , 3 , 7 )

Fritz Whitney ? bari sax ( 7 )

= = = Production = = =

Chris Shepard ? engineering , production , mixing

Sam Hofstedt ? assistant engineering

David Collins ? mastering

Francesca Sundsten ? cover art

Chris Z ? type ( 1995 release )

Justin Gammon ? layout ( 2007 release )