

Nirvana - Smells like teen spirit – Maxi Single (1991)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 20 June 2012 16:47 - Last Updated Saturday, 22 September 2018 08:27

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1 Smells Like Teen Spirit (Edit) 4:30 2 Even In His Youth 3:06 3 Aneurysm 4:44
Bass [Uncredited], Backing Vocals [Uncredited] – Krist Novoselic Drums [Uncredited] – Dave Grohl Guitar [Uncredited], Vocals [Uncredited] – Kurt Cobain

Nirvana was a hugely influential alternative rock trio responsible for popularizing the Seattle-born "grunge" sound that they helped to pioneer. Fully formed in 1990, guitarist Kurt Cobain, bassist Krist Novoselic, and drummer Dave Grohl broke into mainstream music and the consciousness of 'Generation X,' paving the way for bands such as Pearl Jam, The Smashing Pumpkins and Soundgarden to go on to sell tens-of-millions of records.

Yet the attention from the media and fans lavished on the band made de-facto front man Cobain uneasy. He was uncomfortable being the voice of a generation and his indie ethos was challenged by his fame. Grohl and Novoselic were more at ease with the fame phenomenon, but too, they were not perceived as the "voice" of the band. This anxiety and unrealistic industry expectations, along with a troubled personal life and heroin addiction were contributing factors in Cobain's 1994 suicide.

Kurt Cobain and Krist Novoselic met while attending Aberdeen High in the coastal Washington State logging town of Aberdeen. Though they didn't hit it off immediately, several years later they formed the initial incarnation of Nirvana. While guitarist Cobain and bassist Novoselic had defined their roles, it was difficult to secure the "right" drummer. After a Spinal Tap-esque string of five drummers between 1987 and 1990, the duo finally settled on Grohl after a brief audition late that year.

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But it was on-again, off-again drummer Chad Channing who was featured on the groups' first recording. The single Love Buzz was recorded in November 1988 and released by Seattle independent record label Sub Pop.

The following month, the band began recording its debut album, Bleach with local producer Jack Endino. It was highly influenced by the heavy dirge-rock of the Melvins and Mudhoney, 1980s punk rock, and the 1970s heavy metal of Black Sabbath. Originally Bleach only sold 6000 copies upon release, though it was picked up by college radio stations and showed much promise. It has since gone on to sell over four million copies.

Following the release of Bleach in June 1989, Nirvana embarked on its first national tour and in late 1989, the band recorded the Blew EP with producer Steve Fisk.

In April 1990, the band began working with producer Butch Vig at Smart Studios in Madison, Wisconsin on their next studio release. During the sessions, Cobain and Novoselic became disenchanted with Channing's drumming, and Channing expressed frustration at not being actively involved in songwriting. As bootlegs of Nirvana's demos with Vig began to circulate in the music industry and draw attention from major labels, Channing left the band.

That July, the band recorded the single Sliver with Mudhoney drummer Dan Peters. In September 1990, Cobain and Novoselic were introduced to former Scream drummer Dave Grohl, and after a short audition, they knew they'd found their permanent drummer.

Disenchanted with Sub Pop and with the Smart Studios sessions generating interest, Nirvana decided to look for a deal with a major record label, and signed to DGC Records (Geffen) in 1990. The band immediately began recording its first major label album, Nevermind. They were offered a number of producers to choose from, but ultimately held out for Butch Vig, with whom they'd previously worked.

Initially, DGC Records had hoped to sell 250,000 copies of Nevermind, however the album's first single Smells Like Teen Spirit quickly gained momentum, thanks in part to significant airplay of the song's music video on MTV.

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As Nirvana toured Europe in late 1991, the band found that the shows were dangerously oversold, and by Christmas 1991, Nevermind was selling 400,000 copies a week in the US. In January 1992, the album displaced Michael Jackson's album Dangerous at No. 1 on the Billboard album charts. It also topped the charts in numerous other countries worldwide. Said to speak for the "Generation X," Cobain was held up as an icon for disaffected teenagers worldwide. The album has gone down in history as one of the greatest and most influential releases in rock music. It is now thought to have sold over 25 million copies.

Citing exhaustion, Nirvana decided not to undertake another U.S. tour in support of Nevermind in 1992, instead opting to make only a handful of performances and headline the Reading Festival in England. Amid rumors about Cobain's health and the possibility the band might break up, Cobain mounted the stage in a wheelchair as a practical joke, but proceeded to get up and join the rest of the band in tearing through an assortment of old and new material. The performance ended up being regarded by the press as one of the most memorable of its career.

DGC had hoped to have a new Nirvana album by the band ready for a late 1992 holiday season release, but since work the follow-up proceeded slowly, the label released the compilation album Incesticide in December 1992. A joint venture between DGC and Sub Pop, Incesticide collected various rare Nirvana recordings and was intended to provide the material for a better price and at better quality than was available via bootleg copies.

1993 found Nirvana attempting the impossible: a follow-up to the universally praised Nevermind. In early 1993 the group chose Steve Albini, who had a reputation as a principled and opinionated individual in the American independent music scene, to record its third album In Utero. While there was speculation that the band chose Albini to record the album due to his underground credentials, the sessions with Albini were productive and notably quick, and the album was recorded and mixed in two weeks for a cost of \$25,000.

In Utero debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 album chart in September 1993. Though perhaps not as polished as its predecessor, the album was arguably as good musically. Critics were full of praise for it, and it still stands as one of the finest albums in alternative rock. However, Nevermind had a far greater global and cultural impact and still remains regarded as a more 'important' album.

In the fall of 2003 Nirvana embarked on its first major tour of the United States in two years. For the tour, the band added Pat Smear of the punk rock band The Germs as a second guitarist.

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In November 1993, Nirvana, along with Smear, performed for MTV Unplugged. The band decided to stay away from their most recognizable songs, instead opting for more obscure covers.

In early 1994, the band embarked on a European tour. In Rome, on the morning of March 4, Courtney Love, Cobain's wife, found him unconscious in their hotel room and he was rushed to the hospital. A doctor from the hospital told a press conference that Cobain had reacted to a combination of prescription Rohypnol and alcohol. The rest of the tour was canceled, including a planned leg in the UK.

In the ensuing weeks, Cobain's heroin addiction resurfaced. An intervention was organized, and Cobain admitted himself into drug rehabilitation. Yet after less than a week in rehabilitation, Cobain climbed over the wall of the facility and took a plane back to Seattle. A week later, on Friday, April 8, 1994, Cobain was found dead of a self-inflicted shotgun wound to the head at his Seattle home.

His previous actions and suicide note left the impression that he was never fully able to cope with the pressures of international fame or his role as the anti-leader of a generation. Since his death, many fans have speculated that he was in fact murdered, some even speculated by Love, but these notions have never been substantiated.

Several Nirvana albums have been released since Cobain's death. MTV Unplugged in New York debuted at number one on the Billboard charts upon release in November 1994. A few weeks later the group's first full-length video, Live! Tonight! Sold Out!!, was released. In 1996 DGC finally issued a Nirvana live album, From the Muddy Banks of the Wishkah, which became the third Nirvana release in a row to debut at number one on the Billboard album chart.

Scheduled to be released in September 2001 to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the release of Nevermind, Grohl and Novoselic had amassed a collection of Nirvana rarities. However, shortly before the release date, Love filed an injunction to stop the box set's release and sued Grohl and Novoselic, claiming that Cobain's former band mates were hijacking Nirvana's legacy for their own personal interests. What followed was a protracted legal battle over the ownership of Nirvana's music that lasted for more than a year.

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Much of the legal wrangling centered on a single unreleased song, "You Know You're Right," the band's final studio recording. Grohl and Novoselic wanted to include the song on the box set, essentially releasing all of the rarities at one time. Love, however, argued that the song was more important than just a generic "rarity," and should be included on a single-disc greatest hits compilation. They ultimately agreed on the immediate release of a greatest hits package including "You Know You're Right," titled simply "Nirvana." In turn, Love agreed to donate cassette demos recorded by Cobain for use on the box set.

The compilation album, Nirvana, was released on October 29, 2002. On top of "You Know You're Right", the album contained hit singles from their three studio albums as well as several alternate mixes and recordings of familiar Nirvana songs.

The box set, With the Lights Out, was finally released in November 2004. The release contained a vast array of early Cobain demos, rough rehearsal recordings, and live tracks recorded throughout the band's history. Not to be outdone, a best-of-the-box compilation titled Sliver: The Best of the Box was released in late 2005.

In April 2006, Love announced that she had arranged to sell twenty-five percent of her stake in the Nirvana song catalog in a deal estimated at \$50 million. The share of Nirvana's publishing was purchased by Primary Wave Music, which was founded by Larry Mestel, a former CEO of Virgin Records.

After Nirvana, Dave Grohl went on to further success as the frontman for the Foo Fighters and drummer for super-group Them Crooked Vultures with Queens of the Stone Age's Josh Homme and Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones. Novoselic has dabbled in various other musical projects, writes a column for The Seattle Weekly newspaper, and has become an opinionated voice involved in local Pacific Northwest politics. ---amazon.com

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