

# A tragedy labeled grunge assignment

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And then there were none. This short sentence sums up the entirety of the grunge rock era. In the early sass, no musical genre in history has found greatness so quickly and then raced into balloon as fast as grunge did and few genres have relied so heavily on just a handful of artists. In the early sass there was a new type of music that was taking the masses by storm. There had been nothing new in the pop music world for a number of years and generation X was coming of age and demanded some kind of change.

The days when Michael Jackson's style of pop and Metallica's methodical hair/death metal ruled the airwaves were just about to end. Generation X needed more relevance in their music even if it was not as cheery and magical as pop had sounded for some time. Madonna, Ozzy Osbourne, Rick Astley nor any other of the day's pop or rock singers could fill this void. The band that could be most closely considered in the realm of the message of grunge would have been Pink Floyd. The band has always incorporated a very real and sober message in the music they have produced.

Nothing else mainstream was similar in any way. That is where the story gets fascinating because the original grunge band members never intended to be mainstream. The majority of the bands created music to play at underground shows and the music was intended only to be played for people who really wanted to hear and feel it. The popularization of the music and the bands that received the grunge label gave way to both the rise and the undoing of the genre, the bands and the band members themselves. This paper will concentrate on the short but very eventful life of the grunge genre.

A focus will be on two of the pioneer bands, Nirvana and Alice In Chains, which were both from the Seattle, Washington, area and share an epic Journey through the early sass. In the mid-sass the new wave of electronic rock was wearing thin with the younger generation of musicians. There had been an invasion of the European pop style and electronics that coincided with the r; b infusion in the early ass that was not what this new group of musicians wanted to take part in. The hair metal bands such as Poison, Warrant, White Snake and Bon Jove were ruling the other side of the pop spectrum.

Their music was all about glamour and showmanship and did not Incorporate many artistic qualities beyond that. The sound of the existing styles were not seen as sincere by this new generation of musicians because they seemed to be produced specifically to sell USIA. The artists that would later be labeled grunge wanted their music to be felt in a way that did not exist in popular music at that time. They had stories they wanted to tell about scenarios that were not popular and might not sell records. The grunge bands were not started for the specific reason to sell records which is why they did not gain popularity until the early ass.

The bands' primary reason for existing was to expel the confusion, frustration and anger they held inside in a manner that was artistic so people would listen and possibly gain from their insight and experience. Once this new genre made its way to the underground shows in Seattle, where it all began, there was an explosion of talent that navigated toward it. It was not as musically complex as the metal music of the time so the music could be learned easily and played at home on acoustic or electric guitar.

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The grunge sound was dirty guitar sound came from a stylistic change from punk matched with distortion and heavy feedback. Most grunge incorporated a slow tempo and dissonant harmonies. The lyrics were filled with both a hollowness of doubt and insecurity and disenchantment with the state of society. Once the grunge bands found huge followings in the Seattle area some decided to attempt to branch out and sell their albums nationally. A few of these very early bands were Mudstone, The Melvin and Green River. They were signed to what is historically known as the first grunge record label, Sub Pop.

Their attempts were met with marginal sales at best and the future did not look bright for the genre outside of Seattle. In 1989 Soundboards and Nirvana, who would later become two of the most famous grunge groups, released albums that were met with mediocre critical and popular acclaim nationally. It was beginning to seem as if the grunge following was going to grow over time. In 1991, when Nirvana released their second album, Nevermore, generation X went crazy for grunge. The release of the album is the recognized beginning of the grunge era.

In January 1992 the single "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was an overnight sensation, ruling the number one spot on the pop charts for weeks, and opening the doors for the other bands who had been labeled grunge. The music labels were begging for Seattle bands to sign up and make records with them. Some bands did not have the grunge sound but were signed and labeled grunge to boost record sales and help purport a weak recording market. The album was the beginning of the end for glam metal that had been prominent since the early 80s.

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The grunge bands that took the Nor by storm seemed to grow exponentially in popularity. A few of the other bands Nerve Pearl Jam, Alice In Chains, Blind Melon and Stone Temple Pilots. Some of the bands found great popularity in what was happening and incorporated more popular themes in their music instead of the gritty and abrasive sound they began with. Although the bands were still labeled grunge they wanted to preserve their popularity along with their sound. Bands such as Canceled and Collective Soul found middle ground between grunge and pop and were viewed as sellouts to the grunge fans.

This became known as post-grunge. Other bands such as Mudstone and The Melvin were left behind because their music was deemed more inaccessible for Madders audiences. It is strongly believed by both fans and music historians that the true grunge bands were never set up to succeed in the music business. The bands did not want to create radio friendly songs that were made just to sell records. Ere bands were leaving the major record labels to join independent labels which would allow the artists to do what they felt was right.

The major labels recruited new bands that cooperated but they could only make watered down music that was somewhat similar to grunge. This music was not accepted by the audiences it was created for. This marked the beginning of the end for grunge music. A strong case can also be made around the notable heroin use that was prevalent among many grunge band members. The death of Nirvana lead singer, Kurt Cabin, is believed to be the official beginning of the downfall of the genre. There were a few notable band member deaths from heroin overdoses in just a couple of years.

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There was Andrew Nod of Mother Love Bone, Kristin Payoff Hole and Kurt Cabin. Although Cabin died from a shotgun blast it is believed that the heroin in his system caused the Knife, Courtney Love, shot him. Courtney Love was the lead singer of Hole. Laymen Stanley, lead singer of Alice In Chains, overdosed on a mixture of heroin and cocaine in 2002 after battling heroin addiction since the ass. When Soundboards disbanded in 1997 it marked the final blow to grunge and the dedicated followers had to finally come to the realization that it was over.

Soundboards was the final band that had to disbanded or had members die from a heroin overdose. After it was all over there were many positive outcomes of the grunge era. First, there was the infamous clothing line that was marketed toward the followers. Although grunge band members themselves were very opposed to fashion their followers saw them wearing flannel shirts over T-shirts, blue Jeans and Doc Marten's boots so they dressed the same way. Nobody realized that the reason they wore those clothes was because they were poor and lived in northwest Washington.

They did not wear the clothes as fashion statement. The marketers and record labels made it seem as though it was assign statement and began selling very cheap clothing at a 300% markup to all those who wanted to dress like a grunge band member. Nobody realized they could get the same clothes for a fraction of the cost at Goodwill or Salvation Army. Alternative rock was all but nonexistent in the mainstream before grunge but was sought out by the major record labels after the huge success of grunge. Other more obscure genres also benefited in the same manner.

This resulted in the Allophone tour which is still a very popular show today. In 1992 and '93 when the tour began it was geared toward grunge and alternative music. Pop culture came to embrace grunge and the bands became popular for making appearances in movies as well as creating their own independent films. In 1992 the movie Singles featured many grunge bands and the soundtrack was composed completely by grunge bands. In the same year Nirvana and Sonic Youth starred in a documentary named 1991 : The Year Punk Broke. Grunge also brought back a new infatuation with punk music.

Many bands were coming of age just after the downfall of grunge and they took much of the style that grunge offered and incorporated it with the faster punk tempos and even simpler rhythmic style. A lot of these bands are still around today. Green Day and The Offspring are two main examples of this new punk genre that was influenced by grunge. When many grunge bands fled to the independent record labels it allowed the labels to grow in size and popularity so they could then compete with the major labels even after the grunge era was over.

Sub Pop and Epitaph Records are two such labels that grew in notoriety and had similar success as the major labels. The grunge era would not have existed had it not been for Nirvana. Nirvana was formed in 1987 in Aberdeen Washington and included Kurt Cobain, Krist Novoselic and Dave Grohl. After their second album hit the charts and did not even come from #1 for weeks Cobain was known as the "spokesman of a generation." Cobain did not like the reference and did not want to speak for anyone. He played off the title by stating "Part of what Nirvana's songs are about is having the

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freedom to speak for yourself. [1] It is believed that the band made their third album *In Outer* purposely hard to listen to so that the fair weather fans would get off the bandwagon. Nirvana was the ultimate grunge band in that the band played music that they lived . Nothing they played was written by anyone other than band but it was satirical and aimed at pop, glam metal and pop culture. Nirvana's style was what you would expect from grunge because it is what most people base their experience with grunge on. The guitars were either very quiet or very loud.

There Nerve heavy riffs played along with loud drumming that was fairly simplistic. The songs were short and to the point with no long solos. Cobain's lyrics were sometimes mumbled and run together for a phrase followed by screaming until his vocal chords gave out. No matter what style of singing the lyrics were almost always profound. Drummer Dave Grohl also sang occasionally and had a more vibrant voice than Cobain's manic sound which gave the band a strange fusion on rare instances. The band did not abide by any standards for the music that was created.

Some of the music they made could be considered heavy metal and some could be considered alternative rock but it all had a feel to it that had never existed in mainstream music before. Some of the band members' influences were The Melvin, The Pixies, Mudstone, Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. Alice In Chains was another prominent band that grunge gave birth to. Like Nirvana, they date back to 1987. The band members were Laymen Stanley, Jerry Central, Mike Nines and Sean Kinney. The band is now for embodying the darker side of grunge and the mysterious harmonistic of Starlet's and Canticle's voices.

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The band began as a hair metal act that quickly realized their sound could be much richer and they could have much more substance. Alice In Chains thrived on a heavy, guitar driven and distortion rich sound that no other grunge band could and because of this they are classified as metal and alternative also. Although they were personified by their heavy, grinding guitar playing they also played many acoustic songs that were slow and melancholic. Some of the band's songs have solos that are uncharacteristic of the grunge style.

A lot of the music they created had to do with Starlet's bout with addiction and the constant battle to cope with life. Like Nirvana, Alice In Chains wrote all of their own music and only wrote about personal experiences, addiction and feelings of grief. Ere harmonistic between Stanley and Central is enough to run chills down your spine and draw tears to your eyes because you can tell they have experienced the pain that they convey so well. The band's career was cut short when Starlet's girlfriend died from an infection and he went into deep depression and began using heroin constantly.

The band members all took on side projects in hopes off full recovery for their lead singer and vowed not to move on without him. The band went into hibernation anticipating Starlet's return from rehab but on April 20, 2002 he was found dead in his Seattle condominium from an apparent overdose of heroin and cocaine. The coroner concluded that Stanley had been dead since April 5, which was the same day Kurt Cabin had died eight years earlier. It seemed a perfect yet tragic ending for a storied grunge band. There has been no band like Nirvana or Alice In Chains since their respective demise.

The singing styles of the two bands are extremely different in that Cabin was almost bipolar with his sobering voice while Stanley was always in control and brilliantly sober as well. The majority of the songs Alice In Chains played were longer and more methodically structured than Nirvana's shorter and sometimes manic songs. Both bands were from the Seattle area and both broke into the main stream at the same time. Although Alice In Chains stayed Irish was brought on by the release of unreleased music and the possibility of an impending murder charge against Courtney Love.

The remaining members of each and have formed new bands since their lead singers passing. The remaining members of Nirvana formed a new group, Foe Fighters, in 1995. Alice In Chains enlisted a new singer, William Devalue, kept the same moniker and revived their career in 2009 with the new album Black Gives Way To Blue, in which every song is about Starlet's life and death. Both bands have influenced genres after them on many levels. They both were instrumental in the success and the dissolution of grunge. It IS my belief that if Stanley and Cabin were alive and well today grunge would have lasted into the 21st century.

Grunge was but a short era in the history of music but it Nas very powerful and has had a lot of positive influence on the music world. A small region in the pacific northwest was the musical promised land for an unforgettable five year period that saw the birth and death of the grunge era and a handful of music legends. The late sass gave way too new music genre that was simultaneously sobering and enchanting. The song writers were not afraid to allow AS to see inside their lives in ways most people would not allow. The music was not made to gain popularity nor was it made to bring in riches yet

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generation X loved it. The ensuing popularity took the genre to its pinnacle and swiftly led it to its demise. The dirty guitar sound and heavy riffs are a staple of the genre. Most of the music has a slow tempo, dissonant harmonies and a steady time signature throughout. Some of the pioneers of grunge list iconic bands such as Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath as influences. Many of the popular alternative bands today such as Smack and Disturbed list grunge bands as influences. Although it lasted just a short period of time the grunge era changed rock, punk and metal forever. Bibliography History of Grunge Music 18 November 2010

I've decided that I have no desire to do an interview with Rolling Stone. We couldn't benefit from it because the average Rolling Stone reader is a middle-aged ex-hippie turned hypocrite who embraces the past as the "glory days" and has a kinder, gentler more adult approach towards liberal conservatism. The average Rolling Stone reader has denied the underworld's musical options unless it becomes an obviously safe commodity. " - Kurt Cobain [2] 1 ]. Charles R. Cross, *Heavier Than Heaven: A Biography of Kurt Cobain* (New York: Hyperfine, 2001) 113 [ 2 Kurt Cobain Journals (New York: Riverbed Books, 2002) 168