

Nirvana research paper samples

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The life of all the contemporary guitarists that started playing after 1980s was closely connected with the creation of grunge music and the “Nirvana”, in particular, as every guitarist had been learning the “Smells like Teen Spirit” as his first song on guitar during that time. The main goal of this paper is to discuss the genre of the band itself, the other characteristics of the genre that were used by different musicians of the time and after this period; the roots of the genre will be discussed there.

The musical style of Nirvana was best described by its leader and a front man, Kurt Cobain, as he said that the band started as the mixture of the bands Scratch Acid and Gang of Four; however, after a couple of years Cobain recognized that they had to correspond the requirements and expectations of the band's Label “Sub Pop” that wanted them to get a grunge sound in order to get a bigger popularity among the listeners of the time. Therefore, Cobain had to suppress his attempt to play more pop and arty music and compose in a more rocky and grungy way. Despite the unfairness of these restrictions, it's them that made the Nirvana successful with their sound; the limits of “Sub Pop” helped the band to find its personality on the musical arena. As the band members had listened to Aerosmith, Black Sabbath and other hard-rock bands, they found their sound as a derivative from their older colleagues; by the way, it's the only method for every band to find out its own musical style and its unique sound, as they had to mix and experiment with everything they had been listening to for years.

“Nirvana” band was a fan of using the shifts of the dynamics in its music, from quiet to the loudest and vice versa; moreover, Cobain tried his best to

get a mixture of the pop sounds and heavy rock riffs, as he wanted to be clear and plain like Led Zeppelin and change everything to an extreme riffing of a punk rock style. He was also deeply impressed by the creation of The Pixies that started to gain its popularity among the masses and he started to change the tunes of the band from drum-and-bass grooves and the screaming vocals with his Fender on the maximum volume possible. By the end of his days, he realized that he was becoming tired of the same formula used for the band`s songs; however, he also accepted the fact that they hadn`t had enough skill to master another structures, rhythms and dynamics.

The key component for the majority of the band`s songs was the Cobain`s style of guitar playing. It was full of power chords, riffs on the low notes with a loose technique of a right hand, which wasn`t that progressive and technical, but powerful and emotional in its sound. As the grunge genre itself rooted from the punk music, the same techniques were used by Nirvana. The most famous example of this can be heard in “ Smells like Teen Spirit”, where only four power chords were used for approximately the whole song. They were also accompanied by screaming clean vocals of Cobain; however, they weren`t that aggressive and fast that the punks used in their songs, it was more of sadness and disappointment in his vocals. Cobain also often used a clean tone for a verse with an increasing dynamics till the chorus (the same “ Smells like Teen Spirit” is also an example). The increase of dynamics was simply performed by doubling the guitar sound and gradually adding the overdrive to gain a more distorted sound. Bass guitar part wasn`t the complex one either, as it simply played the roots of the power chords

played by the guitar fitting into a drum rhythm. The guitar solos tended to be performed in a blues scale and to repeat the vocals part accompanied by the bass playing the chorus part.

As it was described above, Nirvana was one of the brightest representatives of the grunge genre and its music had its roots in punk and alternative rock music, which was also described above. Let`s also find out other roots and influences on genre and the examples by some other bands of the genre. Experts state that there was a great influence of hard rock and even heavy metal bands on grunge performers, even on Nirvana; however, this influence is seen the worst among the other bands of The Seattle Four. On the contrary, the heavy metal tunes are widely seen in the creation by the band " Alice in Chains"; moreover, they have always been playing heavy metal music by the words of the band members, despite the fact that they have been labeled by the mainstream publicities as grunge band. Jerry Cantrell, the band leader told in his interview to Guitar World in 1996: " We're a lot of different things I don't quite know what the mixture is, but there's definitely metal, blues, rock and roll, maybe a touch of punk. The metal part will never leave, and I never want it to".

The grunge music still exists; however, its popularity lowered drastically with the death of Cobain. There are many contemporary alternative rock and alternative metal bands that are labeled by the tag #grunge; however, it should be accepted that the only true grunge existed within the years of 1980-1990s; it has found its future in alternative metal and even nu-metal genres, but the grunge itself is the history now, just as Nirvana is.

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