“Who said don’t look back?/ Don’t believe ‘em”

- Devo, “Turnaround”

Later covered by Nirvana

University of Alberta

This is Not For You: The Rise and Fall of Music Milieux in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, 1950s -1990s

by

Rylan Kristopher Kafara

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This one goes out to my family. Thanks for the support when I walked off to look for America.

It is also dedicated to the memory of my father.

Abstract

When Nirvana found sudden commercial success with the song “Smells Like Teen Spirit” in 1991, the music industry’s attention became focused on Seattle for the first time. The city, however, had a rich musical tradition going back decades. This thesis examines the rise and fall of music communities in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest from the 1950s to the 1990s: the jazz mileu in Seattle in the 1950s, the Pacific Northwest garage rock network of the 1960s, and the alternative music community of the 1980s and early 1990s. It looks at the factors involved in the development of these three distinct scenes, timing, innovation, and marketability, showing the opportunities and limitations of regional music milieux. In doing so, it reveals a trend of musicians of each scene departing Seattle for more major industry centres like Los Angeles. What separated the milieu Nirvana participated in from earlier regional communities was the fact musicians stopped leaving Seattle. This thesis shows why it was finally more beneficial for them to stay.

Acknowledgments

Much of this thesis deals with the importance of community. I owe a great deal to the people in mine. First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. David Mills. I learned as much from him as from any fanzine, book, or trip to the record store. The same thanks goes to Dr. Lawrence Aronsen, who helped me start this project, and Dr. Jim Martens, who first showed me history is something you can listen to. Thanks also to Fred Mills and Dr. Michael MacDonald, who with these other mentors helped me develop my ideas from scattered notes into a song.

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Introduction: "Saw things so much clearer/ Once you were in my/ Rearviewmirror:"[1]

In the last half of the 20th century, numerous music communities emerged in both North America and Great Britain. These communities produced memorable artists: from the Memphis scene came Elvis Presley; from Liverpool, the Beatles; from Winnipeg, the Guess Who; and from Seattle, Nirvana. Often, discussion about these scenes turns to questions such as: "why that city, and why then?" This thesis seeks to answer the question of how music scenes are constructed, by examining Seattle and the surrounding Pacific Northwest from the 1950s to the early 1990s. It will show that there are numerous elements contributing to the formation of a music scene, or milieu. These include socio-economic and political factors, the geographical location, the history of the community, levels of participation, and the networks of interaction within and with other music scenes. While some or all of these characteristics play an important role in a music community, the development of a milieu depends upon three factors: timing, innovation, and marketability. These factors are interrelated and in practice often overlap.

Timing is the most obvious of the three factors. Scenes that develop at the right time are able to capitalize on elements that might not have otherwise existed, or been accessible. For example, the timing of scenes founded on the musical interests of baby boomers were able to draw on the vast numbers of that age cohort: rock 'n' roll was popular in the Pacific Northwest because it appealed to so many youths in the region. If the audience had not been as large, the milieu's

[1] Pearl Jam, "Rearviewmirror," Epic Records, 1993.

development would have been stifled because of the lack of support from the public.

Innovation refers to the creative ways in which milieux utilize new ideas and technology. Continuing with the rock ‘n’ roll example, if Sam Phillips and other entrepreneurs had not exploited advances made in music recording, independent studios would not have existed outside industry centres. If Phillips had not opened the Memphis Recording Service, Elvis Presley might not have had an opportunity to begin a recording career. In the Pacific Northwest, it meant musicians could get a start without having to move to cities such as New York or Los Angeles. Other examples of innovation include scene participants creating their own publications to document and promote the music community. These publications were called fanzines.

Finally, marketability deals with the potential that musicians from the scene have to resonate with others, and how this is articulated. Marketability happens on a number of levels, from the sound, style, and image of the musician, to the values the musician attests too. The elements extend to other community participants as well. Depending on their reception, these characteristics can either draw more people in, or dissuade them from interacting with the milieu. For example, while the Seattle black community had a vibrant music scene in the 1950s, many whites in the city were oblivious to that fact because of underlying prejudice. Indeed, community participant Jimi Hendrix not only left Seattle to achieve success, but he left the United States for England. When Hendrix arrived

in London, he was perceived in a different, and certainly more marketable, manner.

This thesis draws upon recent research done on music communities. In a 2004 study, *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual,* Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson introduced the term "local scene," and defined it as "a focused social activity [which took] place in a delimited space and over a specific span of time in which clusters of producers, musicians, and fans realize[d] their common musical taste."[2] This local scene can also be part of what Bennett and Peterson called a "translocal scene," a network that was created out of the "regular contact with similar local scenes in distant places. They interact with each other through the exchange of recordings, bands, fans, and fanzines [scene publications]."[3] By definition, a local scene is limited to a particular geographic location. Yet, its development is affected by other local scenes through various forms of communication that shaped a broader music network.

Music Scenes is not the only work to examine the interactions between local scenes and a wider trans-local network. Peter Webb's 2007 study, *Exploring the Networked Worlds of Popular Music,* further stresses the importance of the interactions within music milieux as well as those broader linkages. Webb emphasises the debt owed by a local milieu to the "history, culture, politics, and infrastructure" of a particular region. Again, location was of paramount importance. Webb also examines how a genre of music can be considered an

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[2] Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson, eds., *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal, and Virtual* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), p. 8.
[3] *Ibid*. *Music Scenes* also describes a third type of milieu, called the "virtual scene". This term is used to describe milieu interaction on the internet and related mediums, and therefore does not apply to this time period.

extended milieu by creating a medium of interaction and communication based upon a shared "set of reference points in terms of music, culture, politics, esotericism and spirituality."[4]

This thesis aims to build off research presented in both *Music Scenes* and *Exploring the Networked Worlds of Popular Music*, and to chart the rise and fall of three Seattle milieux, as well as the similarities, differences, and linkages among them. These three milieux are the black music community in Seattle following World War Two, the Seattle garage rock milieu of the late-1950s and 1960s, and finally, the underground music scene of the 1980s and early 1990s, which culminated in the success of Nirvana and "grunge" rock.

The first chapter will focus on Seattle's black community from the late-1940s until the end of the 1960s. During this time, most blacks in the city faced systematic racism that confined them to Seattle's economic, social, and political periphery. Ironically, though, they were located geographically at the city center. Residential segregation forced Seattle's blacks into a small area called the Central District. Inside this community, a circuit of music venues hosted musicians from across the country as well as local acts. These venues were not only social gathering points for the members of the Central District's population, they also served as a means to circumvent the marginalization of blacks reinforced by the city's intolerant policies. This chapter will primarily trace the milieu's development and reference its role in the lives of three participants: Ray Charles,

[4] Peter Webb, *Exploring the Networked Worlds of Popular Music: Milieu Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 257-258. Webb specifically uses the term "milieu" rather than "scene" to signify the complex elements that have an impact in the milieu. My use of milieu is drawn from his work, although the terms milieu and scene (as well as community) are used interchangeably.

Quincy Jones, and Jimi Hendrix. Though initially active within the milieu, due to bad timing, marketability, and a lack of local innovation, all three musicians had to leave Seattle to find success.

The second chapter begins by examining the mainly white music milieu of the late 1950s and 1960s in the Pacific Northwest. Centered in Seattle, a dance circuit developed as rock 'n' roll became popular with teenagers. White youths, who sometimes learned from African-American musicians, did not face the same prejudice that was prevalent in the Central District community. Their growing interest in participating in the milieu coincided with a strengthening of the American economy, technological innovations that increased mass consumption, and the heightening of the ability of youths to influence the direction of popular culture.[5] The emergence of a "teen-culture" suggests that teenagers were not marginalized although they perceived themselves to be. This view was often reflected in their music which reinforced distinctions with the older generation. Bands that flourished in the region included The Fleetwoods, The Kingsmen, Paul Revere and the Raiders, and The Sonics. While the milieu's timing was better, and marketability and innovation were stronger than during the Central District era, regional support alone for these bands was insufficient and unsustainable. The latter portion of the chapter shows that despite this thriving scene, musicians still had to leave the region to further their careers. Many chose to relocate to Los

[5] "Culture," as with many terms that have a common usage and encompass a wide subject area, has a highly contested meaning. This thesis follows the definition outlined by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, whose 'interpretative theory of culture' asserts that it is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life." Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* Second Edition (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), p. 37.

Angeles, and this trend continued following the decline of the garage rock milieu in the late 1960s. The chapter ends in the early 1980s when the economy had shrunk; youths no longer held the cultural power of their predecessors, and the music community went underground.

The third and final chapter shows how the underground milieu of the Pacific Northwest, particularly the local scenes of Seattle and Olympia, overcame the obstacles that were stifling the music community's development. This resulted in the development of a scene where musicians no longer had to leave to find success. Despite the disaffection caused by the lack of economic opportunities, the decay of the suburbs allure, and political marginalization in the Reagan era, youths created a thriving music milieu in the region. Due to this lack of support from the mainstream as well as regional isolation, perhaps the most important punk ethic, DIY (do-it-yourself), emerged. Following the tenets of DIY, those involved in the music community had to create their own institutions, including venues, record labels and fanzines, or else the scene could not survive. By doing do, the music community was also reacting against the condition of the mainstream music industry, and the bands it championed. Seattle, due in large part to the efforts of the Sub Pop record label, offered American youth an alternative to the mainstream status quo; instead of the audience having musical heroes that lived opulent lives they could never have, the bands on stage were perceived as being just like them. The success bands such as Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and Soundgarden attained might have seemed like a sudden shift in American culture, but in fact that transition was the ascendance of an underground

community that had been functioning for over a decade. Through good timing, marketability, and innovation, bands no longer had to leave the milieu to pursue opportunities elsewhere.

The Style of Perceived Meaning

Perception is an important part of this thesis, as it illuminates the values that were reflected in the music coming out of each milieu. As such, many of the sources were written by scene participants as well as the contemporary journalists who reported on it. For example, in musician Michael "Duff" McKagan's autobiography, he asserted: "My friends and old band members may remember some of the stories I recount differently than I do, but I have found that all stories have many sides. These are my stories. These are my perspectives. This is my truth."[6] When using such sources, the historian must keep objectivity in mind at all times, and remember that often the information is based on each individual's perception of events. By using a myriad of sources from multiple viewpoints, a more encompassing picture is revealed. Peter Novick, in his seminal work *That Noble Dream*, argued that "the objective historian's role is that of a neutral, or disinterested, judge; it must never degenerate into that of advocate, or, even worse, propagandist."[7]

With Novick's words in mind, I have striven for a comprehensive methodological approach in this thesis by utilizing a wide variety of sources.

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[6] McKagan was an active participant in the Seattle music milieu before moving to Los Angeles, where he became a founding member of the popular band Guns n' Roses. Duff McKagan, *It's So Easy: And Other Lies* (New York: Touchstone, 2011), p. XI.

[7] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. *2*.

Academic works such as sociologist Ryan Moore's research on the mid to late 1990s' San Diego music milieu, and Sean Marchetto's MA thesis on the counterculture from 1968-1985, have helped inform my approach.[8] Moore, Marchetto, and other scholars have carefully examined music scenes and their institutions in the United States, and have made important contributions to the field. Most projects on music scenes to date, however, have either focused on one particular time period, or survey a large geographical area. Instead, I narrow my study to the Pacific Northwest, but spread the analysis over a four-decade time span and three separate milieux. My reason for choosing this approach is to give a more nuanced description of certain aspects of music communities and their development, while showing how they rise and fall in a particular area.

Moreover, I wanted to examine how music milieux are affected by external factors, and so I have also made non-music related academic sources a foundation of my research. Works by Quintard Taylor, for example, highlighted issues and events that affected Seattle's population, but offered little analysis of the impact on the members of the music community. Therefore, this thesis attempts to bridge the gap in academic writing on the Pacific Northwest.

Also, many non-academic secondary sources have been utilized, such as Clark Humphrey's *Loser: The Real Seattle Music Story* and Peter Blecha's *Sonic Boom: The History of Northwest Rock.* Both of these works covered a longer

[8] See Sean Marchetto, *Tune In, Turn On, Go Punk: American Punk Counterculture, 1968-1985* (M.A., Diss., University of Calgary, 2001), and Ryan Moore, "Alternative to What? Subcultural Capital and the Commercialization of a Music Scene." *Deviant Behavior,* Vol. 26, No. 3 (May-June 2005), pp. 229-252, and Ryan Moore, "Friends Don't Let Friends Listen to Corporate Rock: Punk as a Field of Cultural Production." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography,* Vol. 36, No. 4, (August 2007), pp. 438-474.

timespan and gave extensive narratives on the development of milieux in the Pacific Northwest. Numerous biographies and autobiographies also proved invaluable in the course of my research, as they also provide in-depth narratives, and showed different perceptions of the milieux. Newspapers served as contemporary signposts of the linkages between the music communities and wider society; these conventional sources and more recent innovations such as videos found on YouTube also shaped my research. This website allows immediate access to music and television broadcasts.[9] Interviews have been a critical component of my research as well, as first-hand accounts of the events under analysis add depth to the material.[10]

In addition, a fundamental part of this thesis' development has relied on the primary sources available for studying the musical milieu in the Seattle area from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. Called fanzines, these sources were created and published by a milieu's actual participants, and were a direct link to the ideas and issues of contention that emerged within the community. Thus, they offered unique insights and showcased the relationship between participants as they negotiated with the various characteristics shaping a milieu. Taken together,

[9] As with other recent online innovations, however, researchers need to be diligent in making certain the source material is authentic.

[10] Over the past two years I have also visited archives and libraries in Albany, New York and Seattle, Washington; music venues across the United States, including many in the Pacific Northwest, the Southeast, the Southwest, and along the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles. Additionally, I visited the University of Washington Ethnomusicology archive as well as Puget Sounds, the university library's collection of regional music, and Seattle's Experience Music Project. These visits added depth to my understanding of the wide range of musical talent in the region. Attending conferences across North America and the United Kingdom, and delivering lectures in music and history undergraduate classes have also given me insights that aided in the development of the thesis, especially due to the ideas sparked in debate. I also maintained a blog at www.thepastisunwritten.com. Related to my research, I found it useful for vetting my ideas with the online community.

the sources illuminate the perceptions within each music milieu, an analysis of which highlights the importance of the factors crucial to a scene's development.

In wider terms, this examination helps to further understand the nuances of popular culture. Focusing on Seattle and the Pacific Northwest does not imply regional exceptionalism; in fact, it suggests the opposite. The area can be considered a microcosm for other parts of America, and studying each of the three milieux reflects this.[11] For instance, before the Civil Rights era, African-Americans faced similar repression in other cities, and music was a way of circumventing racist measures. Then, in the 1960s, youths united through rock 'n' roll not just in one location, but all over the country. Two decades later, the next generation of teenagers also expressed themselves through music, but in different ways and under different conditions than their predecessors.

Subsequently, these implications allow for further insight not only into popular culture, but also youth culture, consumer culture, and American culture in particular. Furthermore, it helps understand the media by which popular culture is transmitted, and the forms which do so. It also adds depth to notions related to the business side of the music industry, and the connections within the networks of music communities. Music writer Greil Marcus said that "if one can stop looking at the past and start listening to it, one might hear echoes of a new conversation."[12] It is in this spirit that the thesis has been written.

[11] Undoubtedly, it also helps to understand regions outside of the United States which were closely connected to it, such as Vancouver, British Columbia.
[12] Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 23.

Chapter One: "Hit the Road Jack:" The Rise and Fall of Seattle's Black Music Scene, 1945-1960s[1]

Before the African-American musicians Ray Charles, Quincy Jones, and Jimi Hendrix gained international renown, they had lived in Seattle. Specifically, they resided in an area of the city called the Central District. As the following chapter will show, this was the part of town where blacks were permitted by white authorities to live, work, and seek out their own forms of entertainment. As such, a thriving music scene developed in the area that gave the community an outlet of expression. It was also influential on the city's youth, black and white. Despite the racism prevalent in Seattle previous to the Civil Rights era, blacks gained agency and opportunity in the Central District music scene. This chapter will examine how that process took place, and how an incubated milieu was connected most notably with Los Angeles, and also other regions of the United States. It shows that the lifespan of a music scene was not indefinite, but instead relied on a number of factors, such as community interest, to sustain itself. Furthermore, it argues that unless a regional music industry arises through timing, marketability, and technological innovation, participants had to depart the area to further their music careers. Despite this, the local music scene was important for a number of reasons, most especially because it empowered a minority relegated to the periphery of American society.[2] Thus, this chapter will discuss the connections between the Central District music milieu and the larger Pacific Northwest community, and with the United States as a whole. These linkages will then show

[1] Ray Charles, "Hit the Road Jack," ABC, 1961.
[2] In these regards, Seattle was not unique. Studying the nuances of a local music community such as this helps create a fuller understanding of the characteristics of other milieux in other regions and time periods.

that when Seattle's milieu interacted with the national music milieu, it dialectically transformed those universal traits of the genre into something both regional and cosmopolitan.

In 1959, Francis Newton published a work called *The Jazz Scene.* Francis Newton was the pseudonym for the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, making it unsurprising that *The Jazz Scene* was connecting a style of music to wider social and political discourses. In the introduction, Hobsbawm declared that the book was "about jazz as a part of modern life."[3] As a study on jazz music, Hobsbawm's monograph was not strictly about the style of the music itself or the people that played it, but instead encompassed a broader array of topics. For Hobsbawm, the "scene" was not just comprised of the usual suspects: the musicians, instruments, and sonic characteristics that are normally associated with jazz. Rather, he focused on the performative aspect of music and on the relationship between the musicians and the audience. He examined the roles of the audience, writers and critics within jazz music culture. Hobsbawn determined that these elements, when combined with the business, commercial, and entertainment aspects of western popular culture, comprised what he referred to as "the world of jazz."[4]

In this world, it is important to remember that music was also used as an instrument of dissent. Indeed, in his final chapter, entitled "Jazz as a Protest," Hobsbawn linked jazz to communism, resistance in Nazi Germany, and civil rights in the American South. "Jazz [was] a music of protest," Hobsbawm opined,

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[3] Francis Newton, *The Jazz Scene (*London*:* MacGibbon & Kee, 1960), p. 11. While Hobsbawn published many works on political and economic issues, when writing about music in *The Jazz Scene* as well as *The New Statesman*, he used the pseudonym "Newton." Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* Second Edition (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), p. 18.
[4] Newton, *The Jazz Scene*, p. 11.

"because it was originally the music of an oppressed people." He was of course referring to African-Americans.[5] When discussing the roots of jazz in the American South and its subsequent migration north, *The Jazz Scene* examined many regions of the United States, from Chicago and New York to Kansas City. The Pacific Northwest, however, was entirely absent from his narrative. Had Newton dealt with this region, it would have further supported his analysis.[6] This was because the area's black community created its own means of expression in spite of the authorities' attempts to contain and suppress it. Hence, this grassroots dissent was integral to the relationship between local music communities and the farther-reaching "world of jazz" and its influence on popular culture, since protest was inherent in its very existence.

The genesis of the innovative niche that blacks held in the American music industry in the 20th century begins in the 1890s. In his work *Teenage*, Jon Savage described the resplendence of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair which celebrated the 400th anniversary of Columbus' inaugural voyage to the New World. Outside the fair grounds and largely unbeknownst to the Fair's 27 million attendees, blacks were playing ragtime music. Only a few years later, however, this music received mainstream attention. In 1897, a white bandleader introduced the musical style to the general public, and by the time "Maple Leaf Rag" was released by the African-American Scott Joplin in 1899, ragtime's popularity

[5] *Ibid*, p. 264.
[6] This is a striking deficiency if "Newton" was attempting to achieve a nuanced understanding of American culture. Later works by Paul De Barros and Peter Blecha have demonstrated the importance of music in Seattle and throughout the Pacific Northwest. At the time Newton was writing, the importance of the region's jazz milieu may not have been evident, or perhaps its significance, unknown to the American public, was excluded in favour of more popular locations.

transcended race and class. Savage argued this occurred in conjunction with a broader systemic shift in American values; namely, a migration away from an allegedly Protestant work ethic of toil and responsibility towards materialism and mass consumption.[7] Such a claim, however, is tenuous as it constructs a meta-narrative of American social consciousness, which risks being seen as a sweeping generalization. Nonetheless, these notions do not arise out of thin air; national trends indeed showed evidence of a shift towards consuming products instead of participating, and Savage cites the 1983 work *The Culture of Consumption*, to support this view.[8] Yet, even if one does not accept Savage's assertion, one still must account for the rapid growth of American consumer culture in the 1890s.[9] As America gravitated away from a Puritan ethos grounded in Victorian sensibilities and embraced a comparatively hedonistic ideal, consumption was nourished by a nascent entertainment industry. The new image of America was based on its openness and industrial capacity being wed with the profligate

[7] Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture.* (London: Viking Penguin, 2007), pp. 53-57. Savage points out that the first musician to sell over a million copies of a ragtime record was Irving Berlin, with 1911's "Alexander Ragtime Band." Berlin was white, the essential component necessary in marketing an underground black style of music to a wider, mainstream audience and have it produce extremely profitable returns. Savage, *Teenage*, p. 124.

[8] Richard Wightman and T.J Jackson Lears, eds. *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1983). Savage puts special importance on two essays: Christopher P. Wilson's "The Rhetoric of Consumption: Mass-Market Magazines and the Demise of the Gentle Reader, 1880-1920" and Jackson Lears' "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930." Savage, *Teenage*, p. 475. Wilson's piece traces the role of magazines in mass consumer culture after 1885, and how "the magazine became a primary American institution by which a consumer rhetoric, confined originally to the service or sales economy, penetrated other spheres of American life – politics, contemporary affairs, even family life." Wilson, "The Rhetoric of Consumption," pp. 42-43. Lears' essay attests that America shifted from a society focused on production to one centred on consumption, and examines the part advertising played in the change. Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," p. 3.

[9] What is most important to consider, however one feels about national narratives, myths, or otherwise, is that at the very least the perception of such ideas exist. This perception affects the historians' judgment now, as it did at the time. As will be shown in the next two chapters, many within the underground music network in the United States believed mainstream society was trapped by the structure and institutions of mass culture and consumerism.

opportunities for consumption this offered individuals. For example, Henry Ford's organizational and industrial innovation, the assembly line, radically increased the productive capacity of the Ford Motor Company. Furthermore, the creation and rapid spread of nickelodeons (small cinemas) after 1905 democratized the American film industry; by the end of the decade, nickelodeons sold 10 to 20 million tickets every week.[10] La Petite, the first nickelodeon in Seattle, had opened in 1901. The next year, La Petite was followed by the first theatre that could present both films and live performances. Called Edison's Unique, it was partly owned by John Considine, who later built a vaudeville network that spanned the United States.[11] Not only did the early 20th century witness the emergence of a film industry, there was significant growth in the music industry as well. By 1909, the profits generated from the sale of sheet music trebled when compared to sales from 1890. That year also paid testament to American manufacturing prowess: in 1909 modern production methods produced, according to Savage, over 27 million phonograph cylinders and records per year.[12]

Following the Great War, America entered a decade of economic prosperity which served to further glamourize consumption, despite the onset of prohibition in 1920. The glitter of the era was perhaps best expressed in F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby*, the narrative of which followed several affluent young people positioned highly in New York social circles.

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[10] Additionally, the first official radio broadcast was in 1906. Radio subsequently became a major force in communication, with the advent of normal broadcasting of programs in the 1920s. Savage, *Teenage*, pp. 115-119.

[11] Gerald B. Nelson, *Seattle: The Life and Times of an American City* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), pp. 176-177.

[12] Savage, *Teenage*, p. 124.

Indeed, youth was a fixation in popular culture, with the rise of the hedonistic flapper subculture and the celebrity of young actors such as Rudolph Valentino. The popularity of the flapper image and film stars were fuelled by the growing entertainment industry and the media; the increased consumption of American cultural products was not tempered until the Great Depression. The Second World War, however, removed the economic barriers that had rationed America's consumption during the 1930s. Thus, by the time Germany and Japan surrendered in 1945 and United States servicemen began the migration to the suburbs, the music industry specifically, and the entertainment industry generally, developed to the point where its products were being consumed at a high rate. This occurred not only in the theatres, but thanks to the radio and recording and playback technology, also in individual homes.[13] Additionally, electric jukeboxes became increasingly popular once mechanical and amplification problems were solved. In 1927 there were around 100 jukeboxes in the United States; by 1944 there were 450,000 across the country and in military recreation centres overseas. Popular with servicemen and civilians alike, juke-boxes were a 500 million dollar industry by the war's end.[14] Of particular importance, this technological revolution implied a concurrent standardization of the music industry's practices of production, promotion and distribution of its commodities. This meant that the industry's products were much like the "cookie cutter" homes in which people lived. Ironically, uniqueness was stifled as an individual's access to products

[13] *Ibid*, pp. 118-119.
[14] Michael Sheridan, "Why the Jukebox?" *Negro: A Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (August 1944), pp. 16-17.

increased.[15] Although at first glance one would assume this shift would further limit the prospects of blacks in the Central District as well as across the country, this was, however, not completely the case.

This change in focus towards consumption in actuality afforded African-Americans new opportunities, especially concerning ragtime's musical progeny, jazz. Due to economic limitations endured by the majority of blacks, they were not able to participate in this rising consumer culture to the same degree as the generally more affluent white population. Nonetheless, new opportunities did present themselves to the black community. Notions such as "living in the moment" (putting aside responsibilities and thoughts of the future) were already prevalent in black communities; for most African-Americans the mythology of an irenic suburban existence was little more than a canard. An outlook that focused on the "now" rather than the "later" was already engendered within the broader black community. As Savage pointed out, atrocities such as lynching still occurred at the turn of the century, and "were only the tip of the iceberg" of pervasive violence and structural barriers that cleaved American society.[16] Although lynchings were not as common as they had been earlier, their continuance sustained an environment of fear within the black community. Furthermore, even if the danger of lynching was removed, living in the moment was a normal response to an uncertain economic future. With ragtime and later

[15] Newton, *The Jazz Scene*, pp. 19-20. For statistics during the interwar years, Savage relates that in 1922 record sales in the United States rose to over 100 million dollars, and around 45 percent of youths visited the cinema on a weekly basis. During the next two years, in 1923 and 1924, the number of Americans listening to the radio grew to roughly 20 million. By the early 1930s, around 28 million youths went to the movie theatre each week. Savage, *Teenage*, p. 205, p. 287.
[16] Savage, *Teenage*, p. 56.

jazz's ensuing popularity across the country, however, these styles of music became a method by which blacks could pursue upward social mobility. Living in the moment became a marketable commodity. The popularity of ragtime, and later jazz, afforded blacks an unconventional opportunity, since they now had a product that whites wanted to consume. Firmly grounded in the stylistic innovations developed by slaves, ragtime and jazz expressed grievances that were particular to blacks. As such, there existed an inherent understanding between the audience and performers in the jazz milieu, regarding a specific lyrical and musical subtext. The musicians played, the audience was entertained, and the entire performance carried a special significance for the community. The practice of performance allowed participants, musicians or not, to forge of a sense of communal identity predicated upon a sense of shared experience and identity.[17] This meant that musicians were respected and the vocation was something to be pursued, even if it did not usually promise the monetary benefits associated with other, white-dominated careers.

In the Seattle black community, for example, a jazz musician named Oscar Holden balanced his time between teaching interested locals the nuances of the genre, and playing with his band, which was popular in the city during the early to mid-1940s. These performances included shows at higher-end establishments, such as country clubs. The social mobility this allowed Holden had implications for his family, as his son Ron Holden attested: "[w]e were solid black middle

[17] Quincy Jones, Q: *The Autobiography of Quincy Jones* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002), p. 49.

class."[18] Music gave the Holdens privileges not usually offered to blacks at the time, allowing them to transcend racial barriers that normally prevented minorities from participating in white social circles. Moreover, the salary Holden was making was likely much higher than the average for members of the black community, who were normally relegated to the periphery of the Seattle economy. This mobility had its limits, however. Despite the monetary benefits and higher acceptance into white social circles, restrictions remained. Overtly racist institutions such as the police department did not differentiate between the Holdens and other blacks. Once the performance ended, Oscar Holden still had to return to his community.

Oscar Holden. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.blackpast.org/)

[18] David Marsh, *Louie Louie: The History and Methodology of the World's Most Famous Rock 'n'Roll Song* (New York: Hyperion, 1993), p. 51. They may have been "middle class," but being black kept the Holdens at the mercy of Seattle's racist authorities. The city had what were known as the "Sunset Laws," which gave police the power to detain any African-American found outside the Central District after dusk for questioning. Oscar Holden, called by Peter Blecha a "founding father of Northwest jazz," was stopped by policemen while returning home after playing a show, and subsequently assaulted. While still a minor, his son Ron was sentenced to six months in jail for delinquency after police caught him drinking alcohol. Peter Blecha, *Sonic Boom: The History of Northwest Rock, from "Louie, Louie" to Smells Like Teen Spirit"* (Milwaukee: Backbeat Books, 2009), pp. 8-9. Marsh, *Louie Louie*, p. 55.

The Problem with Labels

It should be pointed out, however, that although a clear divide appears to separate ragtime and jazz music, this schism is more illusionary than concrete and stems from the pre-existing narrative of American popular music. Similar to later divides, between rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll for example, these labels were not constructed by the musicians themselves but, rather, by those with the ability to communicate with the public en masse. These people, the majority of whom were white, dictated the narrative structure of American popular music, as they facilitated its marketing and distribution. This occurred due to the white monopoly over the distribution infrastructure, newspapers, books, radio stations, and other significant types of mass media. Now, this should not necessarily imply an all-pervasive racism, though undoubtedly it did exist in numerous parts of the infrastructure. Rather, I posit that this interest in the objects of black cultural production implies the opposite, or at least an indifference towards race and a fixation on the form's selling potential.

Both the categorization of musical genres and an interest in black music was embodied by Alan Freed. On his near-national radio show, created in 1951, and called "Moondog's Rock 'n' Roll Party," Freed played black rhythm and blues music. Yet, in order to give the music a race-neutral label, he referred to the songs as rock 'n' roll as opposed to rhythm and blues.[19] Rhythm and blues was a marketing label that targeted blacks, and Freed wanted a more inclusive term. This shows that for reasons of marketing, rather than racism, a style of music was

[19] Jonathan Gould, *Can't Buy me Love: The Beatles, Britain, and America* (New York: Harmony Books, 2007), pp. 17-18.

relabelled by an agent who was neither black nor a musician.[20] That said, the fact that Freed had to relabel a term associated with blacks in order for it to gain appreciation by white audiences showed racism was still very much a part of American society. By changing the name, Freed made the relabelled black music accessible to an entirely new segment of the American population which might otherwise not have been exposed to rhythm and blues. Yet, technological developments, such as the transistor radio, and new social trends, such as conspicuous consumption, were only part of this process. It took innovations in music promotion and marketing, regardless of the musicians' race, to popularize particular musical genres.

Alan Freed. (Source: *Google Images*, http://1960sailors.net/05a_freed.htm)

[20] The fact that Freed had to relabel the style in order to introduce it to the broader public suggests that it was done to avoid connection to a cultural form traditionally viewed as black. While those in the music industry might not have been racist themselves, they recognized that in order to expose the wider public to the music, the issue of race had to be excluded from the discourse.

But, as music writer Elijah Wald pointed out, when musicians, such as Louis Armstrong, told their side of the story, there was a divergence from the commonly-accepted narrative propagated by the media and music industry.[21] Armstrong, a black jazz musician who grew up in abject poverty in New Orleans, asserted that:

> [E]very time they change the name, they got a bigger check. And all these different kinds of fantastic music you hear today – course it's all guitars now – used to hear that way back in the old sanctified churches where the sisters used to shout till their petticoats fell down. There ain't nothing new. Old soup used over.[22]

At the time when 'rock 'n' roll' made significant advances in the world of popular music, Armstrong delivered those comments to highlight rock's musical debt to that which came before. Labels often serve to distinguish and differentiate. Yet, Armstrong's point elucidated the creative continuities between seemingly disparate musical genres. Furthermore, the strict segmentation of genre-based musical categories not only imparts limitations, but imbues meaning as well. Hence, the following discussion of the early American, and specifically the Seattle music milieu, will use the term 'jazz.' That does not mean, however, that it did not consist of a blend of styles; the terms ragtime, blues, rhythm and blues, and rock 'n' roll could all be applied at different points in the milieu's development. Yet, jazz is the most fitting label, not only for clarity's sake, but also to stress connections rather than divisions.[23]

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[21] Elijah Wald, *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'N' Roll: An Alternative History of American Popular Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 27.
[22] As quoted in Richard Meryman, *Louis Armstrong: A Self-Portrait (New York: Eakins Press, 1971),* p. 57. Wald, *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'N' Roll,* p. 27.
[23] That being the case, it should be kept in mind that this production of accessibility comes out of a framework constructed by institutions that are often part of mainstream society, not those actually involved in creating innovative black cultural forms. In fact, Wald makes the argument that even

That said, clear separations between musical genres existed, and the term "jazz" can be considered to represent the "other" on the periphery of mainstream American society. In his autobiography, musician and composer Quincy Jones pointed out that when white individuals were exposed in the media for being on the margins of acceptable societal values, such as Gene Krupa when he was arrested in 1943 for marijuana possession, the issue of race was excluded from the discourse and his profession as a jazz musician was instead stressed.[24]

Indeed, jazz music and black communities developed in tandem across all of America. In the early 20th century, jazz milieux existed in many African-American communities, notably Chicago, New York, New Orleans, and St. Louis.[25] This standard bearer of black culture, which became ingrained in American popular consciousness, was not limited to major centres however. In fact, Seattle had a prolific jazz scene that evolved from similar circumstances to those in other black communities.[26] Music was a vital part of Seattle's economy, and had been since the Klondike Gold Rush of the late 1890s. The race to the Yukon had obvious economic benefits for Seattle, and this influx of money

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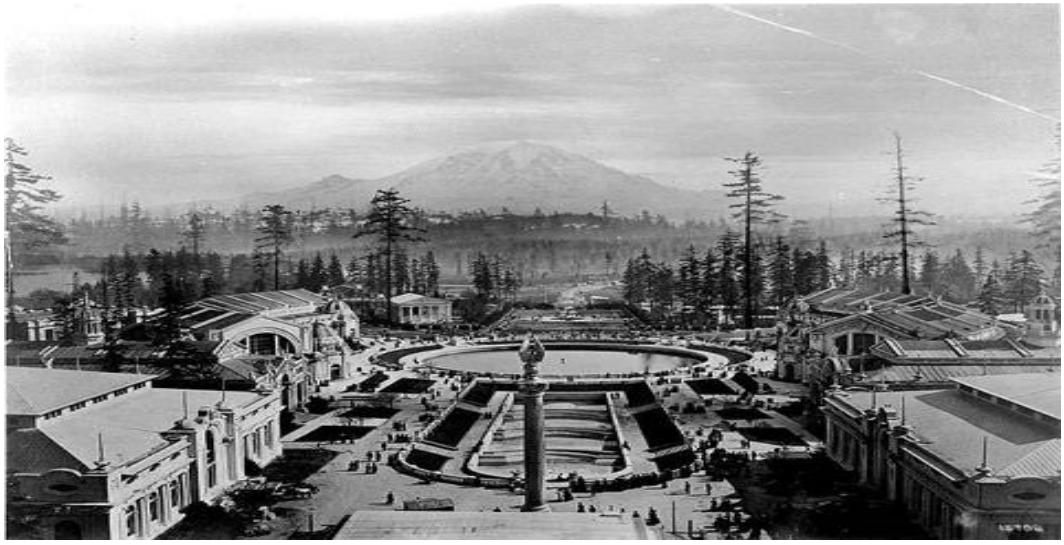
the term "jazz" was coined in a similar vein to Freed's use of "rock 'n' roll." While he recognizes that many popular music writers separated jazz from ragtime solely on the basis that the rhythm changed to a four-beat from a two-beat, Wald cites the jazz musician Sidney Bechet's accusation that "jazz" was first applied to white musicians, and showed jazz to be "like rock 'n' roll, a new name that signified white dancers catching up with black styles rather than a new music." Wald, *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'N' Roll,* pp. 27-29.

[24] Jones, *Q*, p. 53. Jones' attention to this media dialogue shows that the black community was keenly aware of how the mainstream perceived blacks and their cultural forms. Additionally, although jazz was by this time part of mainstream nomenclature, this shows that the term still caused division. As will be shown in later chapters, when one section of the mainstream accepted a style from the periphery, it would often be done in contention with another part of the mainstream. This usually occurred within a wider framework of generational conflict.

[25] Gerald Early, ed., *Miles Davis and American Culture* (St Louis: Missouri Historical Press, 2001), p. 30.

[26] William "Billy" Taylor, "Jazz: America's Classical Music." *The Black Perspective in Music,* Vol. 14. No. 1. (Winter, 1986), pp. 21-25.

attracted important entertainment companies such as the Orpheum and Pantages Vaudeville Theatres. The latter company was started by Alexander Pantages, a Greek immigrant who moved to Seattle in 1902 and opened the Crystal Theatre. Pantages competed against another theatre owner, John Considine, both locally and then nationally in 1906 as each began to create a theatre circuit across America. By 1910, Seattle was the hub for the chief vaudeville network that spread throughout the United States.[27] Furthermore, due to the presence of Hawaiian musicians at the 1909 World's Fair, which was held in Seattle, the city served as the focus of a Polynesian music craze that stretched across the nation.[28] This further gave the Queen City a reputation as a national music centre.[29]

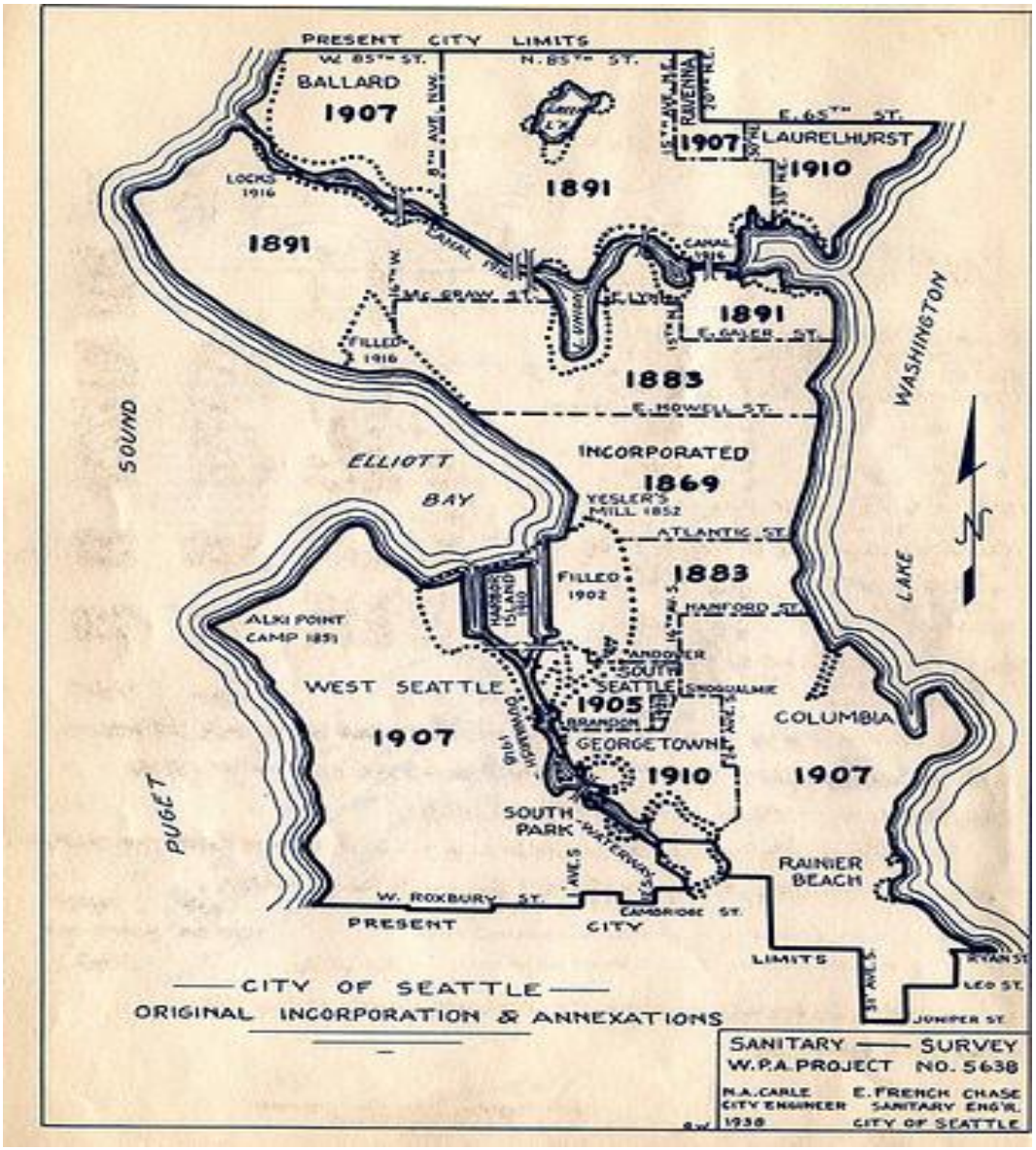


The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, University of Washington Campus. (Source: *Google Images*, originally from the University of Washington library)

[27] Nelson, *Seattle*, p. 177. Paul De Barros, "Introduction," *Jackson Street After Hours: The Roots of Jazz in Seattle*, 1993. http://www.seattle.gov/music/jazz.htm. [Accessed 5 October 2010]. The World's Fair was called the "Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition."

[28] Peter Blecha, *Music in Washington: Seattle and Beyond* (USA: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), p. 11.

[29] Additionally, this transmission set a precedent for a style of music spreading across America from a regional location that did not necessarily have complete claim on the style's true origin. This happened in the United States throughout the 20th century, including several instances in the Pacific Northwest that will be discussed later in this thesis. From 1869 to 1982, Seattle was known as the "Queen City," after which time its nickname was changed to the "Emerald City."



Map of Seattle Annexations, 1938. (Source: *Google Images,* originally from Seattle Municipal Archive)

Seattle was not only an epicentre for popular musical styles; it was also a willing recipient. Innovations in jazz music that originated in New York, Chicago, Memphis, St. Louis, and New Orleans were transmitted into and grafted onto the regional music milieu. Most commonly, this was accomplished by touring musicians. A veritable pantheon of jazz notables played in Seattle during the first half of the 20th century. Vaudeville attendees saw prominent black players such

as Freddie Keppard and W.C. Handy. Moreover, new clubs in the Central District witnessed performances by now legendary names, such as Duke Ellington, Lester Young, and Charlie Parker.[30] Even the great Jelly Roll Morton played the piano at the Entertainers' Club on Twelfth and Main. Farther down Twelfth Avenue at Jackson Street, The Black and Tan quickly became a centre for Seattle's black music milieu.[31] Indeed, not only was there a national jazz circuit, but a local one as well.

The Black and Tan, 12th Avenue and Jackson Street. (Source: *Google Images*, originally from Washington State Archives)

[30] De Barros, *Jackson Street After Hours*.
[31] Patrick MacDonald and Paul De Barros, "Seattle's Fun and Noise: From W.C. Handy to Jimi Hendrix to Robert Cray, the Emerald City has had a Rich History of Black Music," *The Seattle Times*, Sunday 1 February 1998, http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=19980201&slug=2731807 [accessed 5 December 2011].

Despite the vibrancy of the network, clandestine and blatant discrimination, even in the Northern States, existed in political and social institutions throughout the 20th century. The American census of 1930 highlighted the disproportionately low number of blacks in professional careers. An equally disproportionate percentage, however, were musicians.[32] This information mirrored an unmistakable employment and opportunity bias that faced Seattle's black population. To be a musician, one needed neither economic status nor educational achievement. Music, then, became a medium of empowerment, separate from the discriminatory institutional authority wielded by civic functionaries. As a result, the music community permitted the articulation of both shared grievances and aspirations, and thus allowed a specific group of people to create agency for themselves. As Quincy Jones attested, this "gave black men and women dignity."[33]

Seattle's Central District: "Just grab your hat/ and start for The Rockin' Chair"[34]

Woody Guthrie's 1943 novel *Bound for Glory* concludes with a group of

[32] Out of a total black male workforce in Seattle of 1405, there were 32 musicians or music teachers. There were only 2 lawyers, and 2 medical doctors. In the black female workforce in Seattle, which totalled 487, there were 10 musicians or music teachers. There were only 4 trained nurses, and only one school teacher. Comparatively, although the Asian male workforce was at nearly 5000, there were only eight musicians or music teachers. The Asian female workforce was only a few hundred more at 685, and only included three musicians or music teachers. The 1940 census revealed 52 percent of black men worked in the service industry, and for women it was even higher at 83 percent. While the number of Asians in the service industry had decreased substantially in 1940 from the census thirty years previous in 1910, the percentage of female blacks in the sector had stayed roughly the same (84%) and the percentage of male blacks had risen (from 45%). Quintard Taylor, "Blacks and Asians in a White City: Japanese Americans and African Americans in Seattle, 1890-1940." *Western Historical Quarterly,* Vol. 22, No. 4, (November 1991), pp. 414-415.

[33] Of course, there is much debate over whether or not this was actually liberating for women. Jones, *Q*, p. 49.

[34] Ray Charles, "Rockin' Chair Blues," Down Beat Records, 1949.

drifters travelling to the Pacific Northwest to aid the national war effort against Hitler and Hirohito. Like Guthrie's protagonists, many people from across the United States braved the journey to find work in the Seattle area during World War Two. They hoped to be of service building "ships an' stuff to fight...with, if this rain don't wash us out before we get there!"[35] While *Bound for Glory* ends before the reader discovers the drifters' fates, their real-world contemporaries who made the trek to the Pacific Northwest were very likely to find jobs waiting for them. The necessities of a wartime economy demanded a substantially augmented labour force. For example, when war broke out in Europe in September 1939, the Boeing Airplane Company employed 4,000 workers in the Pacific Northwest. By 1944, during the height of production, Boeing employed roughly 50,000 people.[36]

Many of the workers who fuelled the war effort were African-American, drawn north by the promise of financial gain and an escape from racial prejudice in the Deep South. In fact, from 1940 to 1950 the black population of Seattle increased by 413%, rising from 3,789 to 15,666, which made African-Americans the largest minority in the city.[37] Among this group was the family of Quincy Jones, whose father, Quincy D. Jones Sr, found employment in the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton.[38] When the war ended in August 1945, there was no longer any need for the black workers to keep building ships to fight the

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[35] Woody Guthrie, *Bound for Glory* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 318.
[36] Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of the Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 161.
[37] Taylor, *The Forging of the Black Community,* pp. 159-160. These numbers were assembled by Taylor from the *Seventeenth Census of the U.S.* and the *Eighteenth Census of the U.S.* See also: Charles U. Smith, *Social Change in Certain Aspects of Adjustment of the Negro in Seattle, Washington* (Ph.D. diss., Washington State College, 1950).
[38] Born in 1933, Jones was a child of the Great Depression. Prior to his work in the Naval Shipyards, Jones Sr. had been the carpenter for a group of black gang leaders called the Jones Boys that operated in the Chicago ghetto. Jones, *Q,* pp. 1-5.

Japanese. Suddenly lacking employment, Jones' father moved his family into Seattle's Central District.[39] Located in the middle four-square mile area of the city, the Central District offered the Jones family nothing but antiquated and derelict homes in which to reside. Nevertheless, there were positive attributes about the Central District as well. For example, these new arrivals were quickly assimilated into the pre-existing, inclusive and vibrant black community. Hence, Jones Sr.'s choice of locale was not an accident; in truth, blacks had little choice but to live in this section of the city at this particular time.[40]

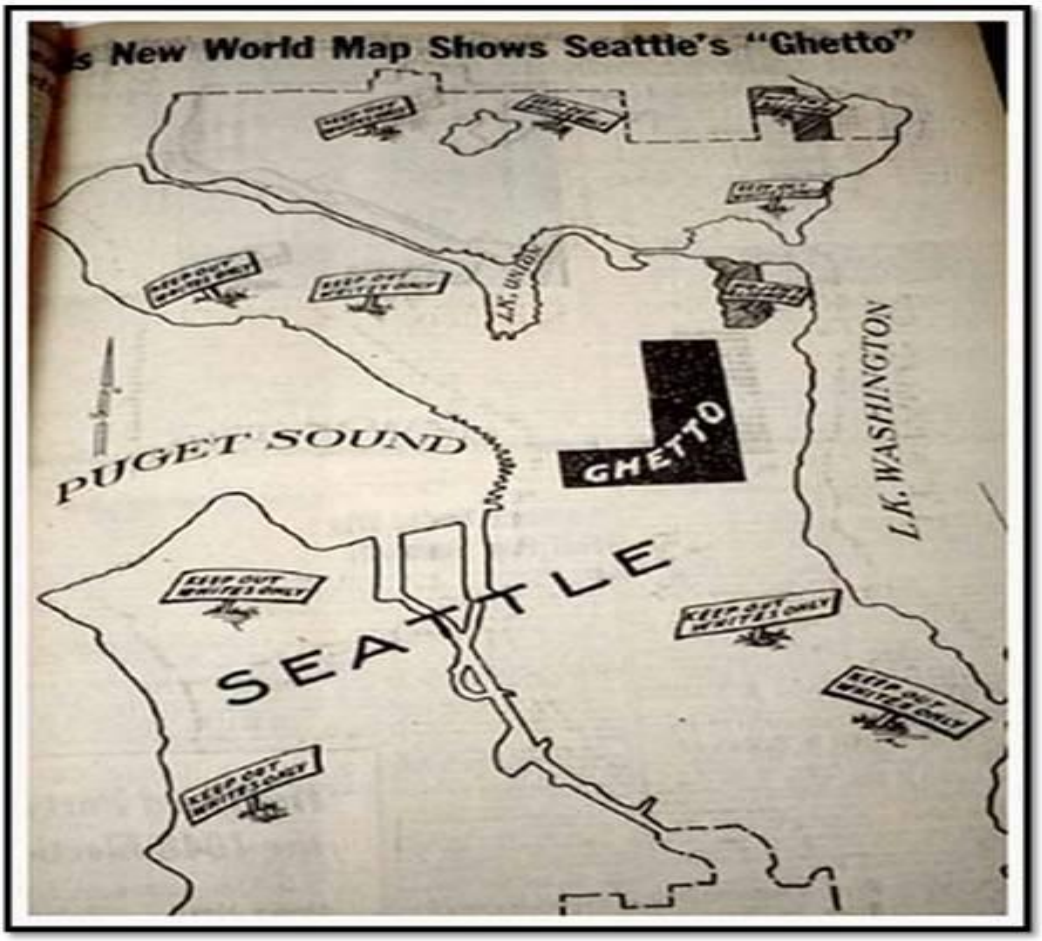

Illustration of the Central District as Seattle's ghetto. (Source: *Google Images,* originally from the *New World,* 14 January 1948)

[39] Jones, *Q,* pp. 21, 40.
[40] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community,* p. 5.

The black community in Seattle was demonstrably ghettoized from the city's larger white community. The influx of blacks into the Seattle area marked a turning point for the region, as it made it much more difficult to conceal *de facto* racism. Following the Second World War, despite the perception of racial tolerance ascribed to the Northern States, discrimination was still rampant in cities outside of the old Confederacy. Instead of the blatant and visible racism manifested in the Jim Crow laws, in Northern States racism appropriated subtle yet equally effective representations.[41] In Seattle, the black community was unofficially segregated and marginalized to the educational and economic periphery. For example, the African-American population surge of the 1940s and 1950s revealed racist policies that had been in place for decades. Census data illustrate this phenomenon. A study, conducted by the Seattle School Board in 1957, found that 81% of blacks were concentrated in only 8% of schools. Furthermore, according to the 1960 census, 80% of Seattle's African-American population of 26,901 resided in only four of 110 census tracts. Also, the black community, which lived primarily in the Central District, had a 37% higher population density than the rest of Seattle.[42]

First, this demonstrated that African-Americans continued to move to Seattle in the immediate post-war years, which suggests that the city was still considered a better option than other parts of the country. Indeed, despite the end of wartime contracts at Boeing, new military and commercial orders continued to

[41] T.V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) pp. 53-54.
[42] Quintard Taylor, "The Civil Rights Movement in the American West: Black Protest in Seattle, 1960-1970." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 80. No. 1. (Winter 1995), p. 3. Census tracts are units of district groupings that divide a territory examined by the census by specific location.

keep airplane production high, and the Seattle economy strong. As such, black unemployment rates were much lower and income rates 53% higher than the national average.[43] Second, it is strikingly apparent that more space was not made available to incoming blacks. Discriminatory landlords often practiced prohibition against potential black tenants, and so this racial minority was normally barred from occupancy outside the Central District. This institutionalized form of racism was supported by municipalities that passed laws that disqualified minorities from purchasing or renting property outside the four-square mile centre of Seattle.[44] Those that managed to acquire property outside the Central District found that it was easily expropriated. Historian Quintard Taylor recalled the story of a black family that tried to purchase a home in a white neighbourhood, only to be removed by a court order, citing a building code violation.[45] In effect, blacks in the post-war era were confined to the Central District, without the opportunity to leave.[46]

This did not mean the black community tacitly accepted these racist forms of control. Rather, throughout the history of the United States, blacks subtly fought against the institutions of white authority by creating their own cultural forms. Music was often at the heart of this resistance. Furthermore, when protesters employed other strategies, such as street marches, they commonly chanted songs and hymns and saw music as a cohesive bond around which they

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[43] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, p. 175.
[44] Charles Cross, *Room Full of Mirrors: A Biography of Jimi Hendrix* (New York: Hyperion Books, 2005), pp. 12-13.
[45] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, p. 169.
[46] Of course, this was true only if one wanted to stay in the Seattle area. Despite the conditions in the Central District, however, for many members of the black community it had always been their home. For others, they had left other regions of the country for better prospects, and may have seen a more subtle form of segregation a lesser evil to the Jim Crow laws.

coalesced.[47] Cordell Reagon, an activist who was imprisoned for his participation in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, related that when he and others were arrested for protesting, it was the *sound* of the community that allowed them to retain strength by acting as a cultural medium through which the community expressed shared grievances. Reagon may have been physically separated from the movement by prison bars, but felt that he was still united with it through music.[48] From the songs of kidnapped slaves brought over from Africa to the gangsta rap on the streets of 1980s and early 1990s' Los Angeles, African-Americans have a tradition of crafting unique musical styles that reflected both local and trans-local social grievances.[49]

In this regard, the Central District was no different from other African-American communities. The music community served both as a collective focus to express disenchantment with racism and as a transformational space in which young black musicians crafted their talents. Several works highlight not only the significance of music for the black community in the Central District, but also its significance for the community's relationship with the wider world. From the beginning of the 20th century, the Central District scene was incubated locally but at the same time benefited from connections with other music milieux in various

[47] Popular songs were molded into 'freedom songs.' For example, the song "I'm Moving On" by R.C. Robinson, better known as Ray Charles, had its lyrics changed to fit the civil rights movement and its grievances. Originally about a man leaving a bad relationship, the song was altered to portray Jim Crow leaving America. Reed, *The Art of Protest,* p. 21.
[48] Reed, *The Art of Protest,* p. 25.
[49] The story of African-American culture in the 20th century is ably told by Robin D. G. Kelley in his 1994 work, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

regions of America.[50] The black Seattle music scene was able to develop in relative isolation from the broader heterogeneous trans-American community due to the city's race-based geographic cleavages. This carried on through World War Two and into the 1950s, when the combination of a rising consumer demand for, and a public interest in, mass-produced and distributed music coincided with technological innovations that allowed entrepreneurs in relatively small centres like Seattle to begin producing and marketing their community's music. In the meantime in Seattle, the centre of the music scene remained in the black community, but its influence was having an effect on the city's white youth as well. Young white bands began imitating the established black musicians' styles and sounds. "Little" Bill Engelhart, a white youth from Tacoma, took full advantage of black players' willingness to teach him after their shows at the city's Evergreen Ballroom. Engelhart's friend and fellow musician, John "Buck" Ormsby, remembered that once the show was finished, "we'd be the little guys who'd go back and talk to 'em, find out more about 'em. 'How'd you get that idea? Where'd you come up with that?' And they were real nice people, excellent people. I never met any nicer people. 'Hey, I'll go get my guitar and show ya.' I

[50] As a counterpoint to stating the importance of the milieu's local incubation, one could pose the question "what would have happened without the relative isolation of the black community?" Likely, it would have been much more difficult for the institutions of the community to develop in such a way as to provide opportunities for its members. Lacking isolation and independence, members of the black community would have been fighting for agency in a homogenous society that set boundaries for African-Americans. Traditionally, reaction by the marginalized was in response to the type of restrictions placed upon them, so other methods of empowerment would have been pursued had isolation not existed. For further reading on the contentious topic of counter-history, see Niall Ferguson, ed., *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (London: Pan Macmillian, 1997).

remember B.B. King doin' that with Little Bill. Hey c'mon."[51] Ironically, when the entrepreneurs in the Seattle area began to take advantage of the various technological advances to sell music, it was the white imitators whom they promoted, rather than established black musicians. Therefore, the incubated and black music milieu of Seattle helped produce a nationally successful commercial music scene made up of primarily white musicians in the late 1950s and 1960s.[52]

Little Bill and the Bluenotes. (Source: *Google Images*, http://pnwbands.com/bluenotes.html)

[51] As quoted in Marsh, *Louie, Louie,* p. 50. On 2 February, 1958, when Engelhart was 19, he worked up the courage to ask B.B. King if he could perform with him on stage at the Evergreen Ballroom. King said yes, and Engelhart moved from the audience to the stage. Peter Blecha, *Sonic Boom,* pp. 30-31.

[52] The impact did not stop there, however, as the music from the white youth milieu (and thereby the Central District as well) influenced both the bands in the underground network existing in America from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, and particularly the community in the Pacific Northwest, whose participants included the bands Mudhoney and Nirvana.

The Central District, originally a diverse area populated by a melange of people of various races and backgrounds, became increasingly African-American in the 1940s and 50s. Such a large influx of people led to a concomitant increase in the number of services, shops and markets within the Central District.[53] The sustainability of these new businesses was predicated upon the community's patronage. Isolation from the rest of the city ensured this support; racism forced what can be seen as a modern day "act local" campaign.[54] Institutions such as an autonomous newspaper called the *Northwest Enterprise* served to support this effort, even prior to the surge in the black population. Promoting the "Local Buying Program" in 1938, the publication asserted that: "[t]his is the kind of militant action that will be necessary before the race receives employment. Individuals and organizations must watch where they spend their money and go a few blocks farther, if by so doing purchases can be made at a firm that maintains a policy of fairness." The statement was accompanied with a pledge for the reader to sign and return to the paper which said: "[i]n all my daily purchases, I will make sure the merchant and the merchandise with whom I trade, besides meeting fair competition, maintains a policy of fairness towards my race."[55]

The developments also shaped and strengthened a thriving and diverse music milieu. Touring musicians did of course play a pivotal role in the

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[53] Cross, *Room Full of Mirrors,* p. 13. The *Northwest Enterprise* provided a voice for blacks in Seattle and throughout the Pacific Northwest. It also promoted methods of empowerment and tactics to circumvent the racism faced by its readers.
[54] Quintard Taylor, "Blacks and Asians in a White City," p. 407.
[55] As quoted in Gerald J. Baldasty and Mark E. LaPointe, "The Press and the African-American Community: The Role of the Northwest Enterprise in the 1930s." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly,* Vol. 94, No. 1 (Winter 2002-3), p. 21. The paper also decried police brutality, and praised politicans and other members of the community that treated blacks as equals. Baldasty and LaPointe, "The Role of the Northwest Enterprise," pp. 23-24.

germination of the Central District's music milieu; yet, the influence of local performers should not be easily discounted. The District's music venues simply could not have operated successfully by relying solely on outside acts. For example, The Birdland Supper Club (known as The Savoy Ballroom before 1955) often featured local bands, including The Dave Lewis Combo. The group, which was hired as the house band for The Birdland in 1957, also had regional success touring with Ike and Tina Turner and numerous other acts.[56] The proliferation of music clubs in the Central District resulted in the continued expansion of the local jazz milieu. Most important, the milieu was mainly left alone by white authorities.[57]

This ambiguity extended into other arenas as well. During and following Prohibition, authorities largely left black music venues alone. Aside from occasional staged police raids, predominantly conducted to appease segments of the white public, the venues and the wider black community were able to act with a considerable degree of independence. This freedom permitted the music community to develop *sub rosa*, unconnected from either the control or interest of

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[56] Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, pp. 17-19. Marsh, *Louie Louie*, p. 51.

[57] Interference from Seattle police should have made the operations of music venues problematic, especially during the Prohibition Era (beginning in 1916 in Washington and lasting from 1919-1933 nationally), but this was largely nonexistent. In actuality, many of the bootleggers organizing the illegal alcohol trade were corrupt police officers. One such policeman was Roy Olmstead, the youngest Lieutenant in the Seattle department. He was sacked in 1920 after being identified as a bootlegger; this firing allowed him to devote all his time to the lucrative business. Soon, Olmstead was known in the media as ""King of the Puget Sound Bootleggers," and cleared 200,000 dollars a month. Olmstead also branched out into more legal avenues, and started one of Seattle's first radio stations, KFQX. He avoided any other illegal trades, and was given an additional title: "the good bootlegger." Indeed, reporting on his popular stature in the region, *the Seattle Post-Intelligencer* argued that he "served a social purpose," signifying, at least, a section of the public's attitude towards such ventures. As quoted in Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (New York: Scribner, 2010), pp. 284-285. "Olmstead, Roy (1886-1966): King of King County Bootleggers," *The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, http://www.historylink.org/_content/printer_friendly/pf_output.cfm?file_id=4015, [Accessed 16 November, 2011].

municipal authorities, as long as it remained in the boundaries of the Central District.[58]

A young Ray Charles. (Source, *Google Images,* http://raycharlesvideomuseum.blogpot.com/2010/08/ray-charles-is-in-town-chronology-1947.html)

Now, this is not to say that whites did not frequent the venues of the Central District. In fact, the name of The Black and Tan Club referred to the Asian, black, and white patrons who all happily intermingled and effectively

[58] Michael Lydon, *Ray Charles: Man and Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 53. While there is some debate over the frequency and intentions of police raids, they were ineffective in inhibiting the community's vibrancy.

created a tolerant space in a racially-charged era.[59] In 1948, those lured to the Central District had a buffet of over thirty clubs from which to choose. It is likely they might have seen a young and blind piano player named R.C. Robinson. Although he was only in his late teens, Robinson quickly became a highlight of the scene due to his proficiency as a player. Born in Georgia in 1930, Robinson had learned to play in the South before migrating to Seattle. Until 1950, he played in at least a dozen venues, including the Black and Tan, before leaving the city for a record deal in California.[60] It was at a venue called The Rocking Chair where Robinson was "discovered" by Jack Lauderdale, President of Los Angeles' Down Beat Records. After being informed of Robinson's talent by a musician named Jackie McVea, Lauderdale personally travelled up to Seattle to see him perform.[61] Robinson's success indicated the milieu's general high degree of talent and ability to produce aspiring musicians. Though Robinson garnered attention while based in Seattle, he had to leave the city to pursue a career in the upper echelons of the music industry and sign a contract with Atlantic Records.[62] Until the advent of widely-available equipment, recording required relocation to larger centres, such as Los Angeles, which by the early 1950s had become a hub for rhythm and blues artists and record labels alike. A touring circuit existed from New Orleans to Los Angeles, bringing musicians like Fats Domino and Little Richard into the southern California city. This migration by the music industry's big names and

[59] Originally called the Alhambra, the Black and Tan was open from 1922-1966. Peter Blecha, *Music in Washington: Seattle and Beyond* (USA: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), p. 59.
[60] Lydon, *Ray Charles: Man and Music*, p. 52.
[61] Ray Charles and David Ritz, *Brother Ray: Ray Charles' Own Story* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2004) 98, 100. Lydon, *Ray Charles: Man and Music*, pp. 57, 58.
[62] Atlantic was a company that had three vital factors in place for a musician of his type: timing, marketability, and technological innovation. The record label was in the business of getting black musicians to the national rhythm and blues audience.

aspiring artists such as Robinson was supported by the largest number of record labels of any city in the United States.[63] Although the Central District's music milieu experienced significant growth after World War Two, Seattle could not compete with Los Angeles and thus it failed to be an independent, important producer of national talent.

Ray Charles and Quincy Jones. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.mfiles.co.uk/reviews/quincy-jones-legacy-series-q-on-producing.htm)

Although Robinson had to eventually migrate to Los Angeles, the artist better known as Ray Charles found success through talent developed in the local Seattle music milieu. Subsequently, he nurtured another member of the black community who would go on to a notable musical career, Quincy Jones. Born in Chicago in 1933, Jones had several early brushes with the law and his home life was anything but stable; his birth mother was mentally ill, his stepmother disliked

[63] Marsh, *Louie Louie*, pp. 15-16.

him, and his father had difficulty finding steady work. Music played a central and positive role in his otherwise tragedy-stricken childhood. His music teacher at James A. Garfield High School, Peter Cook, gave Jones carte-blanche control over the school's band. Outside of class, musicians passed on their knowledge, which enabled Jones to not only master his craft, but to be accepted as a member of the community.[64] Indeed, Robert "Bumps" Blackwell formed a band with Jones that played in Central District rooms like The Rocking Chair and The Black and Tan, and also all-white venues such as The Seattle Tennis Club.[65] Instead of his personal burdens overwhelming him, Jones was able to develop the musical talents that gave his life direction. This example underscores the opportunities presented to young black musicians by the local music scene. Moreover, the milieu served a cohesive social function of simultaneously imparting knowledge

[64] Jones, *Q*, pp. 21, 40. Jones built a life-long friendship with Robinson, for example. When his mother was institutionalized for being mentally ill, Jones the younger and his brother lived for a time with their grandmother in Louisville, Kentucky. A former slave, Jones' grandmother became a connection to both his African heritage and the blight on humanity that was slavery, which his family had endured. Jones, *Q*, pp. 1-5. Jones was not the only youth to benefit from the opportunities and agency allowed by school music programs. Richard Berry, who later penned the song "Louie Louie," grew up on Central Avenue of Los Angeles. Attending the rough Jefferson High School and not wanting to be seen as weak, Berry intentionally developed a bad reputation by carrying a knife. The youth wanted to be seen as a "gangster" in order to offset walking with a limp from a childhood injury. In order to get into the school choir, however, he had to change his image. As he remembered, "I learned about the a capella choir and I wanted to get into it. But you had to be of extreme character to get in the choir. And when I asked my music teacher about it he said, 'Well, you'll never get into the choir because you got a very bad attitude.' He told me, he says, 'If your attitude ever changes, maybe we could.' And I went through a whole semester with an attitude that was gonna get me in that choir. And I got in that choir, and after I got in that choir, he used to take me around, even after I graduated. He used to take me around, and he let me perform before the choir, go up and sing my songs and everything. I mean, I was the best thing in the world in that choir." As quoted in Marsh, *Louie Louie,* p. 19. The choir gave Berry the chance to escape the negativity, danger, and potential violence a life trying to be a "gangster" offered, and instead the youth was able to pursue his creative talents and a singer and songwriter.

[65] Jones, *Q*, pp. 46-49. Blackwell also left the Pacific Northwest for opportunities further down the Pacific Coast; in the mid-1950s he migrated to Los Angeles where he aided Sam Cooke and Little Richard in moving to the upper echelons of the music industry. Marsh, *Louie Louie,* p. 50. Jones, *Q*, p. 49.

and providing agency to a largely disenfranchised population. Yet, Jones provides another example of a black musician eventually having to leave the city.

Quincy Jones. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.clashmusic.com/news/quincy-jones-remembers-jackson)

This process was shown by another individual who came of age in the Central District shortly after Jones departed, James Marshall (Jimi) Hendrix. Born in Seattle in 1942, like Jones, Hendrix came from a broken, impoverished family, and also like Jones, he recognized both the escapism and opportunities inherent in a music career. Hendrix looked at the guitar the same way Charles Bucket looked for the golden ticket in the Roald Dahl book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*: as a way of escaping the negative realities of his life. As with Jones, music offered Hendrix an escape, or at least a distraction from a fractured home life. Before he could even play a guitar, Hendrix carried around a broken one. Prior to this, he

would pretend to play on a broomstick. The reality of Hendrix's home life left few prospects for success; music served as one of the ways to escape a vicious cycle of poverty.[66] For Hendrix, other potential opportunities did not amount to much. Expelled from high school, and after two unfortunate encounters with the Seattle Police Department, he left Seattle in 1961 to join the 101st Airborne Division.[67]

After departing Seattle, Hendrix travelled through the Southern United States, first in the military, and after being discharged in 1962, as a touring musician. Hendrix performed with rhythm and blues bands around what was called the "chitlin circuit," a term given to the network of black venues across the region that played host to musicians lacking a white audience.[68] While touring, Hendrix was immersed in the rich and diverse African-American music milieux of the South, playing guitar with many of the notable musicians of the time, including James Brown, Sam Cooke, Little Richard, B.B. King, Solomon Burke, Jackie Wilson, and the Supremes.[69] Thus, when Hendrix migrated to New York

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[66] Taylor, *The Forging of the Black Community*, p. 178. A study done in the late 1950s by a municipal panel argued that many in the city's police force believed that "any Negro driving a Cadillac [was] either a pimp or a drug peddler." In both of Hendrix's brushes with the law, he had been charged with riding in a stolen vehicle. If he had not joined the military, his other option was jail time. After 1961, Hendrix would not return to the city until he was an international star. Cross, *Room Full of Mirrors,* p.83.

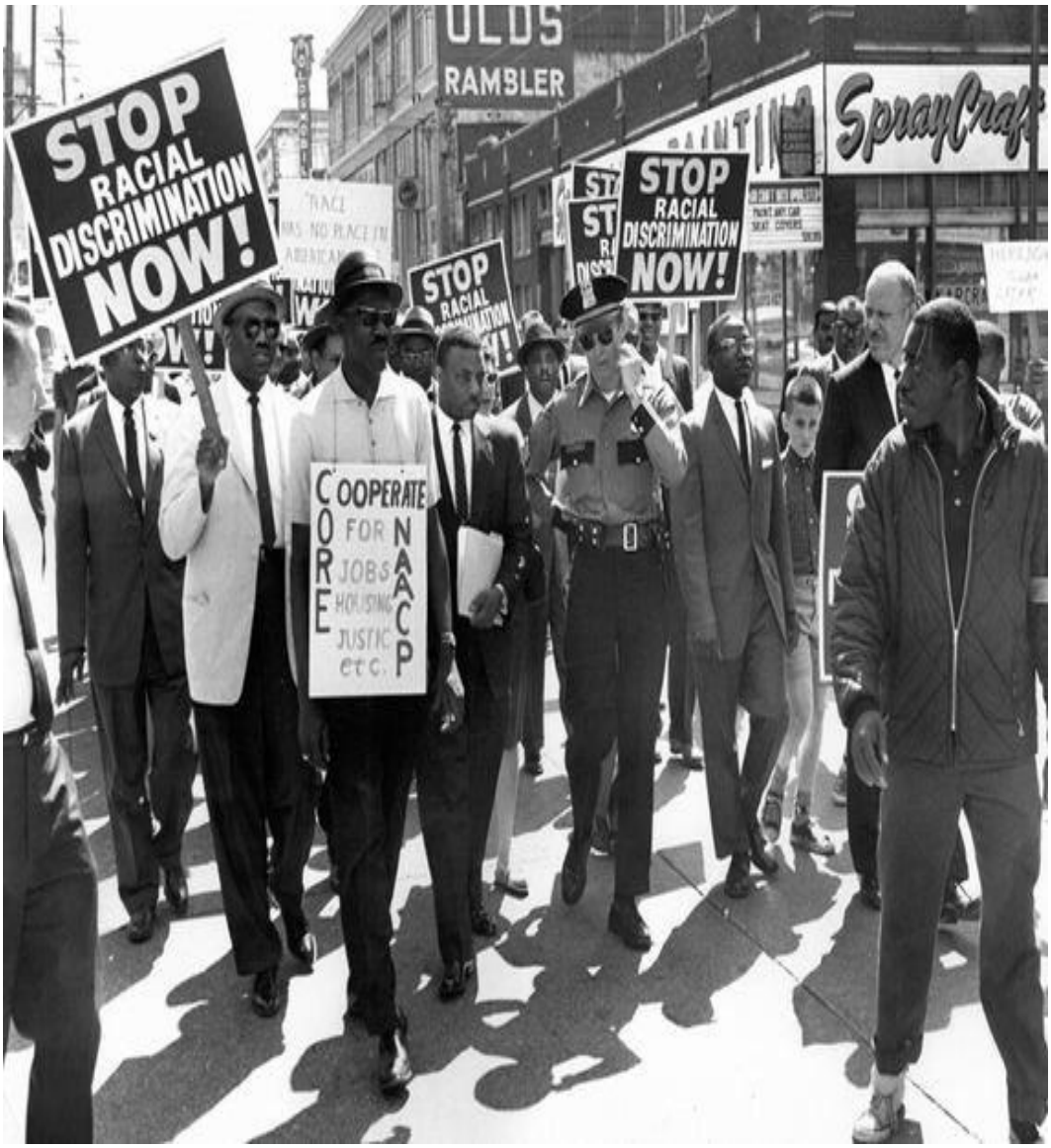
[67] On the other hand, it was also true that many people in the Central District were not playing for either respectability or advancement. Jones and Hendrix both benefited from players teaching them what they knew without any sort of competitive restraint. Older musicians imparted their knowledge to the young without the worry that their style would be stolen for monetary benefit. Indeed, in an interview the New Orleans musician Johnny St Cyr related that "the average working man is very musical. Playing music for him is just relaxing. He gets as much a kick out of playing as other folks get out of dancing." As quoted in "Interview with Johnny St Cyr" in *Rhythm*, 1939. Newton, *The Jazz Scene,* p. 24.

[68]Music writer Charles Shaar Murray pointed out that black musician B.B. King found the name of the circuit offensive, as it referred to "chittering," the term given to inexpensive cuts of meat that members of poverty-stricken black communities in the South could afford, but whites did not eat. Before Emancipation, chittering was the meat given by white plantation owners to black slaves since they found it undesirable. Charles Shaar Murray, *Crosstown Traffic: Jimi Hendrix and Post-War Pop* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p. 49.

[69] Murray, *Crosstown Traffic,* pp. 48-52.

City in 1964, he had been heavily influenced, and participated in, two well-developed black music milieux: the Central District community of Seattle, and the regional scene in the Southern United States.

"I stand up next to a mountain/ Knock it down with the edge of my hand"[70]



Civil Rights march in Seattle, 15 June 1963. (Source: *Google Images*, orginally from online photo archive, Seattle Post-Intelligencer)

[70] Jimi Hendrix, "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," Reprise Records, 1968.

The opportunities that music gave to the Seattle black community can be seen as a microcosm for the United States as a whole. Throughout the 20th century, music was employed frequently as a tactical component in the struggle for equality. In the early 1960s, however, just as this battle reached a crescendo, traditionally black musical forms were co-opted by white musicians, and, with incredible commercial success, [re]packaged for white audiences. This commodification caused blacks to again develop new forms of expression which were again appropriated by white mainstream culture. The cultural form that had given black agency no longer held the same utility. Youths like Charles, Jones and Hendrix participated in the Central District milieu because of the initial opportunities it offered blacks, but now those avenues were in other areas. This shows the ebb and flow of music milieux. From its origins until the 1960s, the Central District milieu played an important role in the lives of the black community living there. As circumstances changed, so did the nature of the milieu and its impact in the region.

The decline of the milieu's standing in the black community was illustrated when Jimi Hendrix, one of its veterans, returned to Seattle in 1968 after a seven-year absence. Hendrix had found fame only after Bryan "Chas" Chandler, from the British group, the Animals, flew him to London in September 1966. He was seen as exotic, and the British press gave him names like "the Wild Man of Borneo" and "Mau Mau." Shortly after his arrival in England, he was immersed in and accepted by the London music milieu.[71] He performed with world-famous

[71] Cross, *Room Full of Mirrors,* pp. 152-155. Hendrix was not the first American cultural export to be advertised in such as way. In the spring of 1919, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band arrived in

guitarist Eric Clapton and upstaged the Englishman. Building off the publicity, Hendrix rapidly became a renowned musician himself. A year and half later, he returned to the town of his youth an international star.

Garfield High School and the Central District, Seattle, 1968. (Source: *Google Images*, originally from Seattle Municipal Archive)

The morning after Hendrix performed at the sold-out Seattle Center Arena on 12 February 1968, he visited Garfield High School to speak to an assembly of the 1200 students enrolled there. For the blacks in the audience, there was no instant connection based upon a shared racial identity. Rather, they saw an alien

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London, giving the British, as Savage relates, "their first experience of authentic American jazz." The band, an all-white group from New Orleans that had found success in New York, had their debut "previewed by a newspaper article that talked about jazz in terms of 'Red Indians and Negroids and West African savages' before assuring its readers that 'the players are all white – white as they possibly could be." Savage, *Teenage*, pp. 172-174, 178.

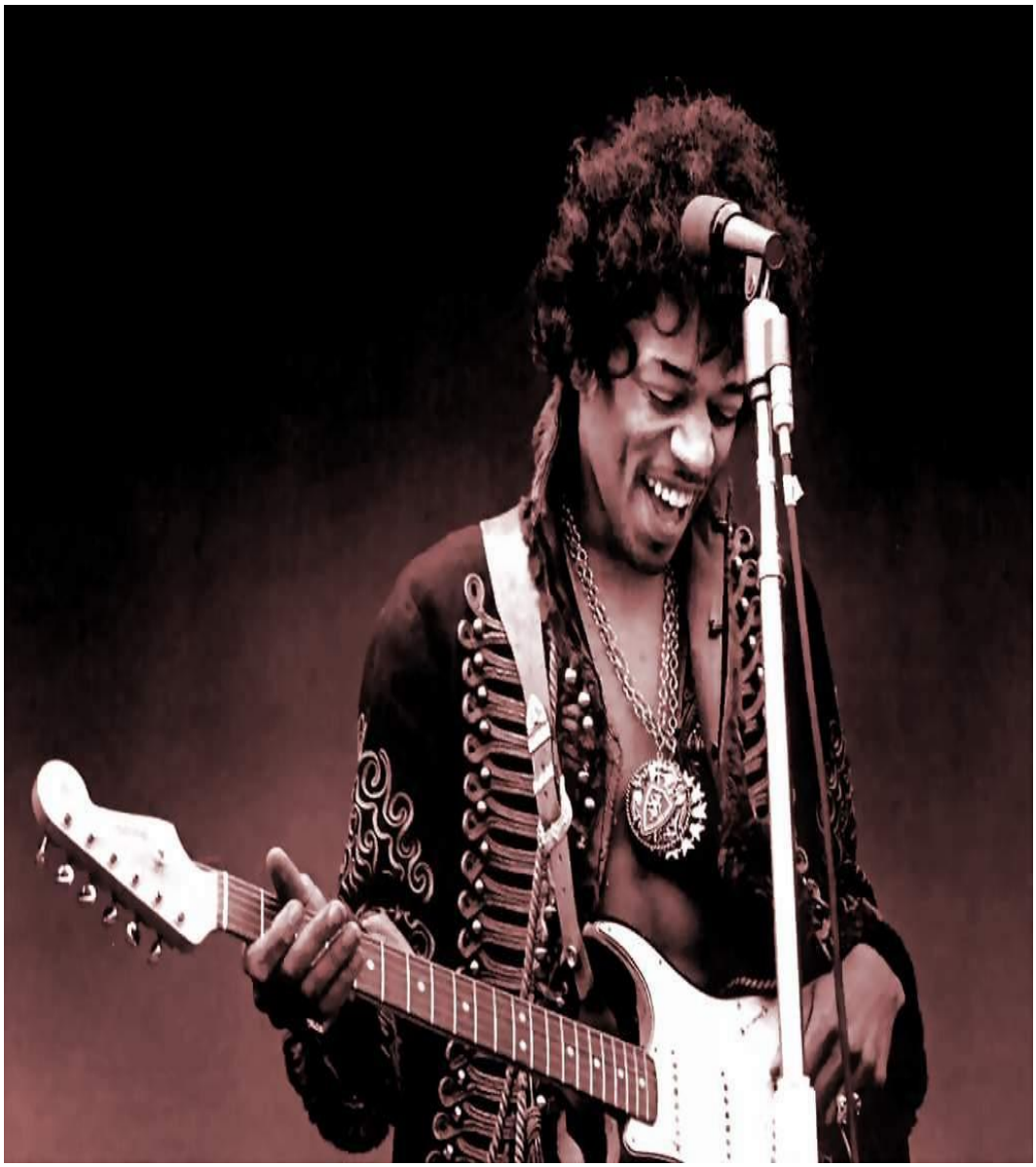
"strange, hippie musician."[72] This is important because the very demographic of black youths whose numbers had once included Charles, Jones, and Hendrix himself, now dismissed the musician out of hand. Furthermore, after leaving Seattle, Hendrix had toured constantly with black acts, including the Isley Brothers, a group he met in New York City.[73] The students heckled Hendrix instead of appreciating him as one of their own. This illustrated that the community had moved Seattle blacks had moved from rhythm and blues to soul.[74]

Elaine Brown, a leader of the Black Panthers, considered soul music to be the movement's "soundtrack."[75] Indeed, it was probably not a coincidence that Aaron Dixon, the head of the Seattle chapter of the Black Panthers, established the group's headquarters adjacent to the record shop where he listened to Motown albums. Black political consciousness had shifted into areas that were more overtly race-driven and militant, which made them much more difficult to exploit.[76] For Hendrix, it was also harder to connect with such an attitude and play the music he liked, as he related:

> Black kids think the music is white now, which it isn't…[.]The argument is not between black and white; that's just another game the establishment set up to turn us against one another…and the grooviest part about it is that it's not all this old-time thing that you can cop out with. The easy thing to cop out with is sayin' black and white. That's the easiest thing. You can see a black person. But now to get down to the nitty-gritty, it's getting' to be old and young – not the age, but the ways of thinkin'. Old and new, actually. Not old and young…most [people] are sheep. Which

[72] Cross, *Full of Mirrors,* pp. 214, 217.
[73] Murray, *Crosstown Traffic,* p. 52.
[74] For a further discussion on those changes in the 1960s, particularly relating to the Seattle black community, see Rylan Kafara, "Seattle in the 1960s: Music, Identity, and the Struggle for Civil Rights," *Past Imperfect,* Vol. 15 (2009) pp. 76-114. The heckling could also indicate an early form of what would later be known in punk milieux as "selling-out."
[75] Reed, *The Art of Protest,* pp. 36.
[76] Aaron Dixon, "The Panther Comes to Seattle," in *Memoirs of a Black Panther,* 2004, p. 115 http://www.itsabouttimebpp.com/home/home.html, [Accessed 10 February 2009].

isn't a bad idea. This is the truth, isn't it? That's why we have the form of Black Panthers and some sheep under the Ku Klux Klan. They are all sheep.[77]



Jimi Hendrix. (Source: *Google Images*, http://troubledsoulsunite.wordpress.com /2010/09/19/jimi-hendrix-a-memorial-bootleg/)

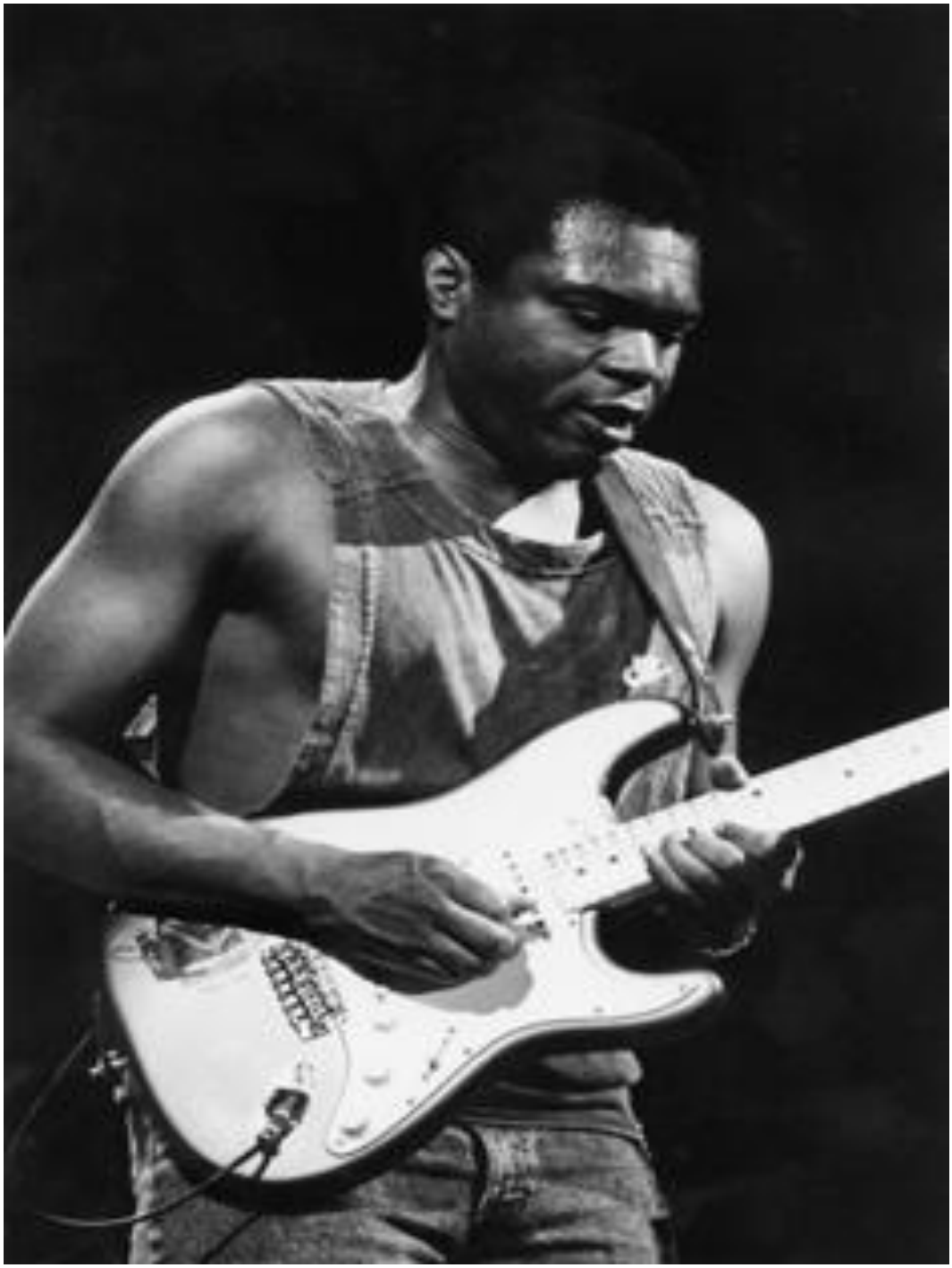
Hendrix was "discovered" in the United States, but by an Englishman, and in Greenwich Village, far removed from Seattle. Chandler took Hendrix from

[77] As quoted in Murray, *Crosstown Traffic*, p. 115.

New York City to London, where a musician of his style was perceived as being more marketable than in his homeland. This was because during the late of the 1950s and the early 1960s, the target demographic in the Pacific Northwest, and the rest of America for that matter, was young and white. The post-Second World War "boomer" generation came of age at this time, and became the focus of popular culture. Emphasis on this group stemmed not from inherent racism; rather, it flowed from decisions based on profitability and broad-based popularity.

The Central District's music community thrived in a particular location, under unique circumstances. It was also influenced by other milieux within the translocal scene, particularly by touring musicians. This played a pivotal role in the development of the Central District music milieu, as did the arrival and local success of Ray Charles. Those that began the process of discovering their musical identity, such as Quincy Jones and Jimi Hendrix, found it in the unique conditions of the Central District. They were influenced not only by the music and spirit of the community, but also the outlying factors that surrounded the stylistic and sonic traits, such as the history of African-Americans in the Pacific Northwest as well as the connection to the wider music network. Despite this, however, all three artists eventually had to leave the region, and this trend continued in subsequent decades with musicians such as African-American guitarist Robert Cray in the late 1970s and early 80s. Years after the Civil Rights Era, Cray still suffered through intolerance from some music venues unwilling to book black bands. After garnering regional popularity in spite of the prejudice, Cray followed

in the tradition of Charles, Jones, and Hendrix in departing the Pacific Northwest and hitting the road for a successful career.[78]



Robert Cray. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.pantellerialink.com/rockshots/rockshots_en_37.html)

[78] Clark Humphrey, *Loser: The Real Seattle Music Story*, (Seattle: MISCmedia, 1999), pp. 26, 110.

Chapter Two: "We Gotta Go Now:" The Rise and Fall of Seattle's Garage Rock Milieu, 1955-1984[1]

In the previous chapter, analysis focused on the creation of the Central District music milieu, a scene reinforced by racial division. The community illustrated the separation between the periphery and mainstream of American culture. This chapter will demonstrate another form of division, based upon generational differentiation. This sustained the garage rock milieu of the Pacific Northwest. Beginning in the late 1950s, the region experienced a dance craze, organized by savvy businessmen and supported by numerous teenagers. This was the foundation for a local music industry based upon a regional variance of rock 'n' roll, called garage rock. The scene thrived until the late 1960s when it went into decline, and the stagnation of the Seattle music community continued through the 1970s.

By again focusing on music scenes, this chapter will also explore the division between sections of the mainstream. Often, these lines were drawn between youths and adults. For example, many youths jumped into the swing craze of pre-World War II America, while older segments of the population lashed out against it. By 1937, jazz music was on the radio waves, with Benny Goodman's swing orchestra a regular feature on CBS programs. In 1938, roughly 100,000 people attended the Chicago Swing Jamboree. In the same year, the editor of *The Jitterbug*, while emphasizing the importance of swing, professed

[1] The Kingsmen, "Louie, Louie," Jerden Records, 1963.

that "[j]azz is a major industry and depends on mass consumption."[2] However, also in 1938, Professor Harry D. Gideonse gave a lecture at Columbia University to over 400 undergraduates arguing that "[s]wing is a musical Hitlerism."[3] To varying degrees, youth culture was often at odds with the status quo, whether it was swing in Germany, rock 'n' roll and Elvis' pelvis, or, as will be shown in chapter 3, Kurt Cobain declaring "here we are now/ entertain us."

Dancing the Jitterbug. (Source: *Google Images*, http://yesteryearsthoughts.blogspot.com/)

[2] Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (London: Viking Penguin, 2007), pp. 317-318, 323.

[3] "Swing Viewed as 'Musical Hitlerism,'" *The New York Times*, 2 November, 1938, p. 25. Ironically, swing culture became a method of resistance by which youths in Nazi Germany actively resisted Hitler's Third Reich. Gideonse was a professor of economics who also wrote extensively on political affairs. "Harry D. Gideonse, 83," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 March 1985 http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1985-03-15/news/8501140946_1_brooklyn-college-economics-new-york-council [Accessed 20 October 2011].

This tension also existed in the 1960s' garage rock community of the Pacific Northwest. The signature song of this regional milieu was the much-covered Richard Berry song "Louie, Louie."[4] In the Pacific Northwest garage rock scene, "Louie Louie" highlighted the divisions between teenagers and their parents. The youth participants were performing, dancing, and otherwise enjoying a song to which their elders could not relate. Music critic Robert "Robot" A. Hull argued that it was the version of "Louie Louie" by The Sonics, a band from Tacoma, that "transformed [it] from an expression of bumbling ineptitude into a frantic testament to the solidarity of teen bands everywhere."[5] The Sonics were not the first, nor the only band to cover the Richard Berry song, however. Even in the Pacific Northwest, there were many other bands such as The Wailers, The Kingsmen, and Paul Revere and the Raiders covering the Richard Berry tune; indeed, for many "Louie Louie" was considered the region's theme song.

The 'teen spirit' expressed by "Louie Louie" in the 1960s signified that the younger generation was different, not disaffected. While the notion of a cultural gap between different generations was not unusual, the vast numbers of teenagers made its implications more arresting for popular culture.[6] Youth embraced "Louie Louie" as an anthem, while it was unpopular with the older generation. As with many other examples, the dismissal of this music by those

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[4] "Louie, Louie," although the trademark musical number of the Pacific Northwest's mainly white garage rock community, was written by Richard Berry, a black man from Los Angeles. This highlights the cultural transmission up the Pacific Coast that was taking place, and the influence that black innovators were having on white musicians and audiences. Furthering this connection was The Sonics covering another Berry tune very similar to "Louie, Louie," called "Have Love will Travel."

[5] Peter Blecha, *Sonic Boom: The History of Northwest Rock, from "Louie, Louie" to Smells Like Teen Spirit"* (Milwaukee: Backbeat Books, 2009), p. 184.

[6] Later, for Generation X however, the song represented both disaffection with their environment, and themselves.

belonging to earlier generations made it even more appealing to teenagers. In this way, "Louie Louie" stressed age-group identity and acted as a signpost and rallying cry in the younger music community.

The most striking example of this division between youth and adults was the controversy that erupted over the popularity of the cover of "Louie Louie" by the Portland-based band, The Kingsmen.[7] In 1964, when The Kingsmen's version of the song had already sold 600,000 copies and was receiving national airplay, authorities moved to censor the song and remove it from public consumption. The governor of Indiana, Matthew Welsh, considered the song's lyrics indecent and demanded it be banned.[8] Though the lyrics were difficult to decipher, and therefore open to the listener's interpretation, many investigations were spurred on by Welsh's claim, from those launched by teachers and parents, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Although the FBI received numerous letters from adults troubled by the danger this song posed to America's youth, their investigation revealed no evidence that the song was indecent. Ultimately, the lyrics were "not definitely determined," with the final report concluding: "'Louie Louie,' [censored] This song became a major hit with The Kingsmen version [censored] said with this type of rock and roll music, a listener might think he heard anything being said that he imagined. [censored] the song [censored] did not contain any

[7] The Kingsmen decided to cover the song after realizing the popularity of Berry's version of "Louie Louie;" they saw youths continually dance to it as it played repeatedly on the jukebox of a teen hangout, the Pypo Club. To find a copy in Portland, however, they had to scour the record stores all over the city, before finally finding it in Bop City Records, located in the Albina District. None of the usual shops had the record, but fittingly, the store located in the black community did. Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, p. 135.
[8] Blecha, *Sonic Boom,* pp. 151-152.

obscenity."[9] All the charges of obscenity against "Louie, Louie" were dropped, and the publicity caused by the uproar helped the record's sales pass the 1 million dollar mark.[10] Indeed, the backlash against "Louie, Louie" by authorities and parents made one fact absolutely clear: drawing lines over a consumer product based on generation was tremendously profitable.

The Kingsmen. (Source: *Google Images*, http://yesteryearsthoughts.blogspot.com/)

[9] The Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Louie Louie (The 60's Song)," *FBI Records: The Vault*, pp. 9, 108, http://vault.fbi.gov/louie-louie-the-song/louie-louie-the-song/view [accessed 20 November 2011].

[10] Not all teenagers were on the side of The Kingsmen. Welsh attempted to censor "Louie, Louie" only after a complaint had first been made by an affronted youth from within his constituency. For a more detailed account of the "Louie, Louie" scandal, see Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, 151-157. For an entire monograph centred on the song and its surrounding implications, see David Marsh, *Louie Louie: The History and Methodology of the World's Most Famous Rock 'n' Roll Song* (New York: Hyperion, 1993).

Marketability was one of the factors necessary for bands like The Kingsmen to achieve mainstream attention without having to leave the region. The "Louie Louie" scandal was also very profitable. For The Kingsmen and many other Pacific Northwest musicians, good timing and capitalizing on technological innovations were vital as well, since these factors allowed a milieu to be successful. Indeed, a regional music scene developed in the late 1950s and lasted until the late 1960s, with most of the artists within it, such as The Sonics, labelled by the term "garage rock."[11] This prolific milieu built off the institutions of the Seattle black community, such as its music venues, and fed off the region's more populous white audience. This regional music industry did not sustain itself for long, however, as the ebb and flow of regional milieux saw the scene diminish in the late 1960s. Scenes can re-invent themselves, but as they need a foundation to build upon; it cannot be done instantly.

The examination of the two local milieux, Seattle's Central District in the last chapter and the Pacific Northwest's boomer white youths in this one, illustrates the relationship between the incubated milieux and the wider translocal milieu, the music industry, and American society in general.[12] By the garage rock milieu capitalising on the three factors for regional success: timing, marketability, and technological innovation, numerous local bands were initially able to gain

[11] Garage rock referred to an amateurish variation of rock 'n' roll primarily performed by youths who practiced in their parent's garage and played rough, sloppy music heavily laden with adolescent themes. The Wailers, The Kingsmen, Paul Revere and the Raiders, and The Sonics were all garage rock bands.

[12] Furthermore, several writers have noticed the connection between garage rock in the 1960s in the Pacific Northwest to variants in the region a few decades later. The most comprehensive account of this narrative is found in Peter Blecha's 2009 work *Sonic Boom*. For example, Blecha discusses the links between the garage band The Sonics and subsequent Pacific Northwest bands that paid homage to the earlier group, on pages 184-185. David Marsh, Charles Cross, Clark Humphrey, and most recently Jacob McMurray, have also written on the subject.

national and international renown without having to leave the Pacific Northwest. Bands did, however, eventually depart for opportunities elsewhere.

Of the three, technological innovation was the most important factor for ensuring success. During World War Two, Nazi propaganda efforts compelled German engineers to create more efficient ways to record sound. They developed a method by which sound was recorded on magnetic tape to replace the old process of etching into a disc made of aluminium (but commonly referred to as acetate) or wax. Until the 1950s, the geographic distribution of recording technology kept the music industry concentrated in traditional locations such as New York and Los Angeles. Then, beginning most notably in Memphis, with Sam Phillips, the owner of the Memphis Recording Service and the Sun record label, independent companies started to produce and market regional sounds to the national and international market in the 1950s. By 1951, when Sam Phillips opened his recording studio, this process originally created for fascists brought democracy to the recording process. Due to reduced recording costs, and newfound accessibility in terms of portability and operation, independent recording studios opened all across America.[13] Independent labels soon followed; they were able to record, produce and nationally distribute music styles that had germinated outside of major music centers.[14] The careers of Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison, and, most famously, Elvis Presley started in the Sun

[13] Jonathan Gould, *Can't Buy me Love: The Beatles, Britain, and America* (New York: Harmony Books, 2007), pp. 19-20.

[14] In September of 2010, while travelling through the Southern United States I found that there is still much evidence for the persistence of distinct regional styles of music in places such as New Orleans, Nashville, and Memphis. Some of these styles may persist because of their value to local tourist industries, but they nevertheless remain diverse.

Studios. Technology enabled the driven and savvy to carry out what would be referred to as DIY, or the Do-It-Yourself ethic. Acting independently of the mainstream music industry meant musicians no longer had to leave regional hubs like Seattle, as Ray Charles did, in order to begin their recording careers. Timing and marketability also had to coalesce, however, to provide the necessary opportunities for success.

Recording equipment and memorabilia from Sun Studios, Memphis. (Source: Personal Collection)

Timing, the second factor in terms of importance for regional success, was an obvious element in the rising popularity of the Pacific Northwest milieu in the early 1960s. The baby-boom generation was reaching adolescence and was starting to set the cultural trends for the United States, including Seattle. Musically-inclined white youth in the Pacific Northwest were heavily influenced by the Central District milieu, and imitated and built upon the musical style of black artists. Aspiring white musicians frequented the same venues as black performers and learned from the scene's masters. Larry Coryell, for example, who played in The Checkers, a band that often performed at a venue called The Spanish Castle, attested that "the Northwest scene was very influenced by African American culture."[15] According to the players themselves, the white groups in the garage rock scene learned from the numerous black players at local music venues.[16] As John "Buck" Ormsby from The Wailers revealed in an interview with *The Rocket* in 1983:

> A lot of the groups around here learned a lot from black music...people like Bobby Blue Bland, Little Willie John and Little Richard and the Upsetters, they would play at a dance hall in Seattle called the Empire Ball Room and in a place in Olympia called the Evergreen Ballroom. It was all black people, and we'd be standing out in the middle listening to this great, high energy music. We'd just go there and stand and not move – just watch....We'd see black groups and cover the songs the next week, and a lot of people would think they were our tunes.[17]

The rise of the Pacific Northwest garage band milieu was part of the rising influence of youth in general, and teenagers in particular, on popular trends in

[15] Charles Cross, *Room Full of Mirrors: A Biography of Jimi Hendrix* (New York: Hyperion Books, 2005), p. 76.
[16] In turn, groups such as the Sonics would influence countless other bands from the underground American music network in the 1970s and 1980s. The Sonics were also heavily influenced by the bands of the British Invasion, especially their "mod" style of dress.
[17] As quoted in Clark Humphrey, *Loser: The Real Seattle Music Story*, (Seattle: MISCmedia, 1999), p. 10.

America. The last chapter discussed how the rise of the entertainment industry in the 20th century came with an emphasis on consumption of commodities. In the late 1950s and 1960s American youths were able to determine which products became popular. This coincided with technological innovations in mass consumption, and most importantly, transistor radios became popular amongst teens.[18] Transistor radios were small and portable, giving listeners the ability to take music with them. These listeners were young, had disposable income, and were interested in rock 'n' roll. A new product was neatly combined with popular interest just as radio stations across the country were switching to rock-orientated formats between 1955 and 1960. With transistor radios having ear-plugs, this meant adolescents could listen to rock 'n' roll radio wherever they went, without their parents having to hear the music.[19]

Marketability was the final aspect required for the national success of a regional music industry. For a band to be commercially successful, it had to reach an audience that had the means and was willing to purchase its cultural output, from concerts tickets to copies of albums. In the Pacific Northwest, the requirements for marketability were two-fold – sound and style. In the early 1960s, musicians often had to be clean-cut, young, white, and produce a sound

[18] Furthermore, it would be a mistake to overlook the inspiration African-Americans lent to this trendsetting, even if the fact was lost on most audiences at the time.
[19] Michael Brian Schiffer, *The Portable Radio in American Life* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1991), p. 184. By 1960, American teenagers were spending 10 billion dollars a year, not including the money their parents spent on them. This figure was likely also high, especially if they disliked the rock 'n' roll music of their offspring, and helped lead to the mass consumption of radio products. 5 million portables were sold in the United States in 1958, almost 10 million in 1960, over 21 million in 1965, and 27 million in 1969. Schiffer, *The Portable Radio in American Life,* pp. 184, 223.

that was profitable for record companies to show any interest.[20] The first label from the Pacific Northwest to capitalize on the availability of these factors was Dolton Records. Bob Reisdorff, the president of the company, profited from his connections in distribution and radio; the first group he recorded, The Fleetwoods, achieved an international number one record with "Come Softly To Me."[21] Stemming from his able management skills, strong promotional abilities and access to sufficient capital, Reisdorff moulded and marketed local talent on a global scale to the culturally-important teenagers.

The Fleetwoods. (Source: *Google Images,* originally from The Fleetwoods, "Truly Do" b/w "Runaround")

[20] Of course, established black artists such as Ray Charles were still able to succeed in this climate.
[21] "Come Softly To Me" quickly became a local hit when 5 Seattle radio stations added the song to their rotations, which then spread outside of the Pacific Northwest following Reisdorff reaching a distribution agreement with his connections at Liberty Records in Los Angeles. The song hit the top of the pop charts in regional markets such as Ohio and Florida, then nationally and finally overseas in the United Kingdom. Subsequently, The Fleetwoods became the first group from the region to sell a million copies of a record. Peter Blecha, "Dolton: the Northwest's First Rock 'n' Roll Record Company," *History Link.org Essay,* 14 March 2006. http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm//essays/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=7636 [accessed 25 November 2008], Blecha, *Music in Washington*, p. 71. Joel Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn's Top Pop Singles 1955-2002*, (Menomonee Falls: Record Research, Inc., 2003), p. 250.

Reisdorff was a businessman and, as such, strove to maximize profits. At the time, this meant choosing acts like The Fleetwoods. As depicted on the cover sleeve for their single "Runaround," the group fit a very particular image. The cover showed the band, comprised of three Caucasians, two females and one male, all wearing the same colour sweater and all with contemporary haircuts. The mainstream found The Fleetwoods' image safe and respectable. Black musicians from the Central District lacked such commercial appeal, and though artists such as Jimi Hendrix were playing in popular local bands at the time of The Fleetwoods' success, lucrative record contracts failed to materialize for those talented blacks who stayed in the area.

Bob Reisdorff and Bonnie Guitar on the cover of *The Cash Box*. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.pophistorydig.com/?p=8864)

Reisdorff was looking for a 'hit sound.' Yet, this did not mean that a sonic style alone could be equated with popularity. To attain maximum marketability, an act had to be a complete package, and that meant also having the right image. Acts that followed The Fleetwoods, such as The Frantics, continued in this vein. Although numerous rhythm and blues groups with black members played in Seattle throughout the 1950s, it would be Little Bill and the Bluenotes who, in 1959, were the Pacific Northwest's first white R&B group, and they were signed to Dolton Records.[22] The Blue Notes had started out as an all-black group that had been impressed with "Little" Bill Engelhart's musical abilities and allowed him to join the band. Learning all he could from the older black players, Engelhart kept the name of the band once the other members left, and replaced them with white youths such as John "Buck" Ormsby. Established black musicians were often amenable to passing on their knowledge to interested white youths, much to the benefit of guitarists like Engelhart. Even Ray Charles, whom Engelhart met backstage at the Evergreen Ballroom, took the time to pass along some kind words. When Engelhart told Charles that he too played the blues, the piano player paused before guessing that the youth he was speaking to was white. "Well," Charles said, "it doesn't matter, if you *feel* it."[23] In the time before the Civil Rights era, this attitude of acceptance by blacks was in stark contrast to the policies of white authorities, albeit those policies by no means represented all Caucasians, as Engelhart showed.

[22] Blecha, "Dolton: the Northwest's First Rock 'n' Roll Record Company."
[23] As quoted in Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, p. 30.

Before Engelhart's band was signed to Dolton, Reisdorff had them change their name to Little Bill and the Bluenotes, no doubt for promotional reasons. Their first single, "I Love an Angel" fit The Fleetwoods' model of success and became popular. Bands like The Fleetwoods and Little Bill and the Bluenotes were signed to Dolton for the very reason that Hendrix was not; at the time and in that particular location, they had the makings of a "hit sound." Soon thereafter attention was lavished on many other white bands, from The Ventures, The Kingsmen, The Wailers, to The Sonics and Paul Revere and the Raiders, all significant bands regionally, and nationally as well.

Not only were these bands that achieved regional and national success white, but they were also young. As stated previously, the stress placed upon youth and mass entertainment during the 20th century was directly related to a change in social consciousness and an increased availability in consumer durables since 1900. Considerable contemporary attention focused on adolescents in the first decade of the 20th century.[24] In 1911, however, this trend shifted when American psychologist G. Stanley Hall published *Adolescence and Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education.* Until Hall's study, thoughts on adolescence had been contained in a religious-moral discourse.[25] Hall examined adolescent development based on scientific evidence, laying the foundation for subsequent studies. The success of Hall's work, combined with the advent of the music industry, cinema and moving

[24] Savage, *Teenage*, pp. 118-119.
[25] Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 139.

pictures, saw youth command national attention. By the 1920s they could be a target market, but they were not yet able, however, to dictate what was popular.[26]

After World War Two, these youths that were neither children nor adults became a group of consumers with both independence and disposable income. Products were mass-produced with a newly-defined age cohort in mind: the teenager. Becoming an identifiable group in America meant that they garnered more attention than ever before; teenagers were a target market in a society that valued entertainment and mass-consumption. Of course, youths had consumed before, but in the ten years following America's victory in Europe and the Pacific, as the country's economy soared and the affluent moved out of city-centres and into the suburbs, the cultural power of teenagers greatly increased. So did the perception that they were different, and a separate group in society.[27] The grievances of teenagers were addressed in J.D. Salinger's 1951 novel *The Catcher in the Rye* and the 1955 film *Rebel Without a Cause*. The protagonists in these works came from affluent families that cared for them, yet they still saw themselves as confused, lonely, and marginalized. Highlighting this division reinforced the teenager as a distinct group in the American consciousness.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the significance placed on youth and mass-produced, distributed, and readily-available entertainment was even more prevalent. This emphasis was heightened further by the baby-boom. Youth culture had for several decades garnered national attention; it was during the baby-boom that youth finally took control of popular institutions and were able to dictate

[26] Savage, *Teenage*, pp. 465.
[27] Savage, *Teenage*, p. 465, Andy Bennett, *Cultures of Popular Music* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2001), p. 7.

cultural trends.[28] The cultural power of this young demographic cluster stemmed not only from its sheer numbers, but also from the degree to which it capitalized on the previously discussed changes in technological innovations, marketability and timing.[29]

For example, developments in radio communication further enhanced this generation's influence over developments in American culture. The initial national radio broadcast was a boxing match pitting Georges Carpentier, from France, against the American Jack Dempsey on 2 July 1921. Hundreds of thousands of people from all over the country listened to the same voice describe Dempsey's victory over the Frenchman. By the end of the 1920s, radio became a more accessible form of mass communication able to reach listeners across the United States. It was used by President Franklin Roosevelt throughout his presidency to deliver "fireside chats" to the American public from 1933 to 1944. Roosevelt's voice entered homes and addressed matters of serious concern, giving assurances and a sense of unity to the entire country.[30]

The popularity of radio continued into the early 1950s; however with the advent of television it started to lose its audiences and thus its profit margin. With programs and advertisers making the switch to TV en masse, the newer

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[28] Owram, *Born at the Right Time,* pp. 136-137.

[29] According to William Strauss and Neil Howe, the birth range for inclusion into the boom generation was 1943 to 1960. This puts its first members in their late teens at the dawn of the 1960s. Based on this definition, 79,000,000 baby-boomers would be born in the United States. When Dolton started selling records, these people were young, and looking to be entertained. William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991), pp. 299-300. Obviously, pinpointing the exact date that one generation starts and another ends is impossible. Furthermore, belonging to a generation often depends as much on one's attitude as their age. *Generations*' categorization, however, gave a framework that made navigating the nuances of the topic more permissible.

[30] Marc Fisher, *Something in the Air: Radio, Rock, and the Revolution that shaped a Generation* (New York: Random House, 2007), p. xiv-xvi.

communication form took precedence in American households. Todd Storz, the son of a wealthy beer brewer in Omaha, who was more passionate about broadcasting than alcohol, found a new niche for radio. By making it community-focused, Storz provided radio listeners with what was excluded from television. He formatted his stations to transmit local news and advertisements, and play music that was most popular in the region, based on record sales. Thus, the region's audience was listening to what mattered most to them. Credited with creating the Top 40 radio format, Storz kept radio part of the American mentality. Families may have gone home to gather around the television in the evenings, but outside of residences, in vehicles and at work, radio was still being heard.[31]

Not only did radio find a place in the background of people's lives, but Storz's innovations also pushed fashionable songs on the public, at the time rock 'n' roll was making a surge into popular culture. When a song gained strong sales, it would be repeated on the radio many times a day. Radio, by reaching a large regional audience, supported the garage rock milieu by playing its music and advertising its shows. Instead of only following national trends when crafting playlists, radio DJs played songs by local artists, and promoted shows in the area. This airplay was furthered by the Top 40 format since these regional artists were also selling records. While this gave musicians publicity, it additionally served the DJs' own interests. For example, Paul Berg, known to his Seattle listeners at the Top 40 station KJR as Pat O'Day, was also a local show promoter.[32] Not only did

[31] Fisher, *Something in the Air*, pp. 3-8.
[32] KJR-AM made the switch to the Top 40 format in 1955, and Berg began working at the station in 1959. KJR's programming was a melange of what was popular around the country, and locally as well. Humphrey, *Loser*, pp. 9, 27.

Berg *promote* shows on the air, he also *booked* bands at The Spanish Castle to play with the local act The Wailers. As band member Kent Morrill remembered, they were each "from different schools; so all the schools followed us." This instant school spirit fan base had its benefits according to Morrill, who related that "when we played dances, we drew like 2,000 or 3,000 kids."[33] The Wailers, and Berg, had tapped into a thriving local market. Berg transcended the role of mere radio personality and show promoter by fusing both occupations into one, to both his and the talent's benefit. The more thoroughly Berg publicized a gig on the radio, the more people attended his events.[34]

The Spanish Castle. (Source: *Google Images,* http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/photogalleries/localnews2010020254/)

[33] Greg Prato, *Grunge is Dead: The Oral History of Seattle Rock Music* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2009), p. 11.

[34] The Pacific Northwest was not the only place where boomer-orientated radio stations and a flourishing teen-dance circuit instigated a thriving milieu. Winnipeg, Canada also had both of those ingredients, and the ensuing success resulted in the city being known as the "Liverpool of Canada" and "Liverpeg" by the mid-1960s. This was in reference to the successful Liverpool scene of the early 1960s that had produced The Beatles. James W. Martens, "Portage and Main, 50 Below: Myth and Reality of Winnipeg Rock and Roll in the 1960s," *Unpublished.*

These people were part of a population upsurge that occurred in Seattle between 1940 and 1960.[35] In the former year the population was 368, 302, and in the latter it had risen to 557,087. Furthermore, the metropolitan area population was 452,639 in 1940, and 1,107,213 in 1960. This meant that not only had the city's population increased dramatically, so had the number of people living in suburban areas. Families that could afford to live outside the city departed for outlying areas, with fathers commuting to work everyday and leaving their families in the suburbs.[36]

The suburban youths were eager for communal activity, and flocked to all-age events. The success of Berg's November 1959 Wailers concerts at The Spanish Castle helped ensure the subsequent popularity of teenage dances in the region. Naturally, it also meant a considerable profit for him and the bands he hired.[37] The radio station that employed Berg, KJR, had an estimated 37 percent of the region's listening audience tuning in during Berg's tenure as the promoter of the area's teen dance circuit from 1959-1966. That circuit, at its height, hosted nearly 60 dances per week organized by Berg's promotions company, O'Day and Associates.[38] The radio acted as the circuit's, and the teenagers, unified voice. The

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[35] With Seattle's population of 557,087 in 1960, 26,901 were African-American, a percentage of 4.8. The Japanese population was 9,351, Chinese 4,076, Filipino 3,755, and Native American 1,729. Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of the Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), pp. 244-245.
[36] To combat the traffic congestion this commuting caused Seattle, road improvements were carried out, and after the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, freeways were constructed. These highways linked the center of Seattle with the suburbs, and eventually with the other major cities in the region. Nobert MacDonald, *Distant Neighbors: A Comparative History of Seattle & Vancouver* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp.155-158
[37] Peter Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, pp. 78-85. Berg, who has been credited with being the first radio DJ to play the Beatles in America, went on to have a successful career in broadcasting as well as concert promotion; he was the promoter of Hendrix's 12 February 1968 show that marked the musician's return to Seattle. Cross, *Room Full of Mirrors,* p. 214.
[38] Humphrey, *Loser,* p. 10.

generation was at this time starting to dictate what was popular, and radio, to stay in business, abided by their interests and helped to shape them. The hype the music community received on the air served to make it thrive even more; by switching on the radio a youth had immediate and constant access to the regional milieu.

The circuit was built around The Spanish Castle. Just as venues like The Black and Tan and The Rocking Chair had been the center of Seattle's Central District milieu for many years, The Spanish Castle acted as the common ground for bands and audiences to involve themselves in the music community. Jimi Hendrix, for example, participated in The Spanish Castle scene from 1959 until his departure from the region in 1961.[39] Berg claimed that "there was this black kid that used to hang around. He'd come up to me real polite and say, 'Mr. O'Day? If anyone's amp breaks, I've got an amp in the trunk of my car. It's a really good one. But if you need to use it, I get to play, too.'"[40] Hendrix biographer Charles Cross discredited Berg's narrative because Hendrix never owned a car or a "really good" amplifier, but he does point out that Hendrix played there in 1960 with The Rocking Kings and was in the audience for other bands such as The Wailers. In any case, the impact the venue had on Hendrix is evident by the song he penned in tribute, "Spanish Castle Magic." The importance of venues in fostering music communities cannot be overstated. Places like The

[39] In a 5 October 1993 album review of Nirvana's *In Utero, a* student writing under the name Fleury Mesplat argued that "Nirvana knows [that] 'grunge' is just a cute name given to garage band music going back to the Seattle of the early 1960s with Jimi Hendrix and [numerous other bands] play[ing] the Spanish Castle." Fleury Mesplat, "Record Reviews: Nirvana In Utero," *The Gateway*, 5 October 1993, p. 10.
[40] As quoted in Cross, *Room Full of Mirrors*, p. 77.

Spanish Castle allowed youth to participate directly in the local milieu, and its location kept it away from restrictions put in place by Seattle's municipal government.

Paul Berg and Jimi Hendrix, 1968. (Source: *Google Images, (*http://www.pugetsoundradio.com/cgi-bin/forum/Blah.pl?m-1309746666/)

The location of The Spanish Castle fuelled its importance to the regional milieu. Built on the Seattle-Tacoma highway in Kent, Washington, the venue was still accessible to Seattle musicians like Hendrix, but also to Tacoma bands such

as The Wailers, The Ventures, The Sonics, and Little Bill and the Bluenotes.[41] This convenience was no accident; Berg chose The Spanish Castle because it was outside of Seattle city limits. Since its founding, the municipal government had enacted laws to prohibit underage dancing in public places. One of these measures still remained in the late 1950s; anyone organizing a youth dance in Seattle had to give at least half the event's earnings to a local charitable organization. Thus, groups such as the Catholic Youth Organization and the Parent-Teacher Association became the official "sponsors" when events were held, associating the dances with organizations whose function was to govern over youth, not encourage their independence. Despite the growing audience for all-age dances in the city, it was still more lucrative for Berg to host events outside of Seattle, where he could avoid the bureaucratic measures set to prevent such events from being held.[42] This maneuver then helped separate all-age shows from the dictates of municipal authority, which had concerns about holding these events. Berg's interest, however, lay in promoting shows to local audiences which were well attended. As with successful bands and record labels, Berg capitalized on the potential radio offered, in both marketing and reaching a large audience. He also had the good timing to begin promoting all-age shows just as teenagers were looking for enjoyable outlets of expression. Finally, within the ebb and flow nature of music communities, the interest in music was at a height, which made finding numerous proficient and likeable bands possible.

[41] Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 10, Cross, *Roomful of Mirrors*, p. 75, Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, p. 85.
[42] Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, p. 83. This was not the last measure taken by Seattle's municipal government to restrict teen musical events. As will be shown later, the Teen Dance Ordinance of the mid-1980s made it nearly impossible to hold all-ages shows within the city.

Berg's success was indicative of both the interlinked nature of the Seattle milieu and his ability to capitalize on said linkages. Although the potential for success existed due to technological and communication innovations, bands had to have proper timing, and a sound, image, and style that was deemed marketable by those in the music industry. These factors all came together for Paul Revere and the Raiders, a band that went from playing the teen-dance circuit to national prominence. Early in their career, the members of the band found themselves embroiled in a rivalry over competing versions of "Louie Louie" with the Kingsmen. Both recorded their renditions of Richard Berry's song in Portland in April of 1963, and each had a manager connected with local radio stations in the city. Ken Chase, program director at KISN, worked with the Kingsmen, and Roger Hart, a DJ associated with numerous stations, including KKEY in Vancouver, who managed Paul Revere and the Raiders.[43] Unsurprisingly, both Chase and Hart played their respective bands' "Louie Louie" on their stations, exaggerating each song's popularity to justify heavy rotation.[44] Both groups had strong followings in the teen-dance circuit, and the competition only enhanced their popularities.[45] Industry connections utilized by their managers, rivalry in the community, and their subsequent regional success provided the foundation for

[43] Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, p. 141.
[44] Humphrey details in *Loser* that The Kingsmen's version of "Louie Louie" received airplay outside of the Pacific Northwest because the band was on a black R&B label, Scepter/Wand, and a station in Boston that played the record only did so after assuming the Kingsmen were black. Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 13. Blecha, in *Sonic Boom*, details how Jerry Dennon, Ken Chase's local distributor, convinced a connection in Boston to play the record, with the friend saying, "if you think you got a hit, you send me two hundred records for free and we can get them on the black station here. The DJ owns a record store and I just have to spiff him two hundred records that he can put in his store. Believe me, we'll get airplay, okay?" Dennon was clear to explain that was the single instance he "participated in payola." As quoted in Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, p. 145. Payola was the term applied to taking bribes for playing songs on air. A payola scandal erupted in the late-1950s, and meant the end of the career of Alan Freed.
[45] Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, pp. 136-149.

both groups to gain nation-wide popularity. The Kingsmen's version of "Louie Louie" even reached the top of the *Billboard* Pop Singles Chart.[46]

The thriving teen dance circuit spread throughout the Pacific Northwest, and into Montana and Idaho. Years before his band became embroiled in "Louie Louie" competition with The Kingsmen, a savvy youth named Paul Revere Dick began playing all-age dances in Caldwell, Idaho with a band called The Downbeats in 1957. Soon after, the piano player decided to circumvent event promoters and organize shows himself, meaning more opportunities to perform, and more money for the band. While this allowed the band to focus attention on music, other obstacles did exist, however, as there was no recording studio in Idaho at the time. Instead, in 1960 The Downbeats recorded at the radio station in Boise, KGEM. The band had written several original instrumental songs, and also covered a few by The Wailers. Revere drove to Los Angeles with the recordings where he met John Guss, the owner of Gardena Records. Guss agreed to release the band's music, after suggesting a name change from The Downbeats to Paul Revere and the Raiders. From Los Angeles up the Pacific coast to Vancouver, the band charted with their first release, "Beatnik Sticks." This had the band playing throughout the Northwest, as well as promotional shows in California. Subsequent releases saw a further rise in the band's popularity; Dick Clark wanted to put the group on his national music television program *American Bandstand,* and they were set to perform on the show live when Revere was drafted into the military.

[46] Whitburn, *Top Pop Singles*, p. 385.

Although he was a conscientious objector, he still had to serve in as a non-combatant in Oregon from the spring of 1961 until the summer of 1962.[47]

Paul Revere and the Raiders. (Source: *Google Images:* http://www.bobreuterstl.com/scratchy.php?playlistID=12)

The band reformed when Revere finished his service, and the band once again began playing teen dances and recording new material. In 1964, Paul Revere and the Raiders took advantage of the British Invasion, when The Beatles and other English groups seized control of American musical institutions.[48] The

[47] Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, pp. 121-126.

[48] The British invasion began at exactly 1:35PM on 7 February 1964, when The Beatles landed at John F. Kennedy airport in New York City. The sonic style and mod fashion of the English bands

members began wearing Minutemen uniforms on stage, combining their appearance with their marketable band name.[49] The group's image was a spin that capitalized on the climate of that moment in popular culture, and it helped add another layer to the strength of the regional music milieu in the Pacific Northwest by creating a local David to a foreign Goliath. Such a dichotomy increased the publicity of bands within the scene and promotion of the local circuit.[50] The potential of the regional music industry emerging in the Pacific Northwest allowed for a reversal of the usual transmission of talent from outlying areas to traditional centres, at least while the region's music community remained skilful in balancing the factors necessary for not only keeping musicians in the area, but maintaining the public's attention.

Perhaps the most telling indication of the proficiency of the Pacific Northwest regional garage rock milieu was the relationship between members of the Wailers and the music industry. As discussed above, The Wailers were a vital component to the success of Berg's teen-dance circuit, especially due to their performances at the Spanish Castle. Signed to the Golden Crest Record Company in 1959, pressure was put on the band by the New York-based label to relocate to

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had heavy impact on Americans, especially the baby-boom. Douglas T. Miller, *On Our Own: Americans in the Sixties* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), p. 202. Berg and his production company Concerts West were responsible for the marketing of The Beatles show in Seattle on 31 August 1964. Humphrey, *Loser,* p. 13.

[49] The Paul Revere and the Raiders album *Here they Come,* for example, included the liner note "in 1964, the British invaded America all over again....Since history seemingly repeats itself, the United States is now marshalling its forces to protect the American Way of Music. Among the staunch defenders are five swingin' gentlemen known as Paul Revere & the Raiders." Additionally, *Time* magazine predicted, "Paul...and the colonially clad quintet may make whole regiments of fans waver from their British alignments." As quoted in Blecha, *Sonic Boom,* pp.182-183.

[50] Alternatively, John Ormsby asserted that the influx of English music and culture hindered his band, The Wailers. "The one thing that slowed us down," Orsmby said, "was the British Invasion. Everybody – even American bands – started talking with an English accent." Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 14.

the East Coast after the success of their album *The Fabulous Wailers*, and the songs "Mau Mau" and "Tall Cool One."[51] Bucking the tradition for musicians to move to industry centres such as New York or Los Angeles to further their careers, the high school-aged youths opted to stay in the Pacific Northwest and finish their education. When the New York City-based Golden Crest management became disinterested in promoting the band from the other side of the country, three members of the group, Kent Morrill, John Ormsby, and Lawrence Robins, took responsibility for releasing their music independently. Using the same local recording studio that Dolton recording acts utilized, The Wailers recorded their version of "Louie Louie" as well as a cover of "Maryann" by Ray Charles in 1960. Spurred on by other regional acts recording the Richard Berry song, the band delivered its copy to Berg at KJR, and The Wailers' rendition of "Louie Louie" was added to the station's rotation, resulting in a regional hit. From 1961 to 1967, The Wailers' independent label, Etiquette Records, released scores of singles and eight full-length albums, including a live recording of The Wailers performing at The Spanish Castle, and also The Sonics' albums, *Sonics Boom* and *Here are the Sonics.* Etiquette Records continued to be successful before folding in 1968, shortly after The Wailers' singer, and founding partner of the label, Lawrence "Rockin' Robin" Roberts, died in an automobile accident on 22 December 1967.[52]

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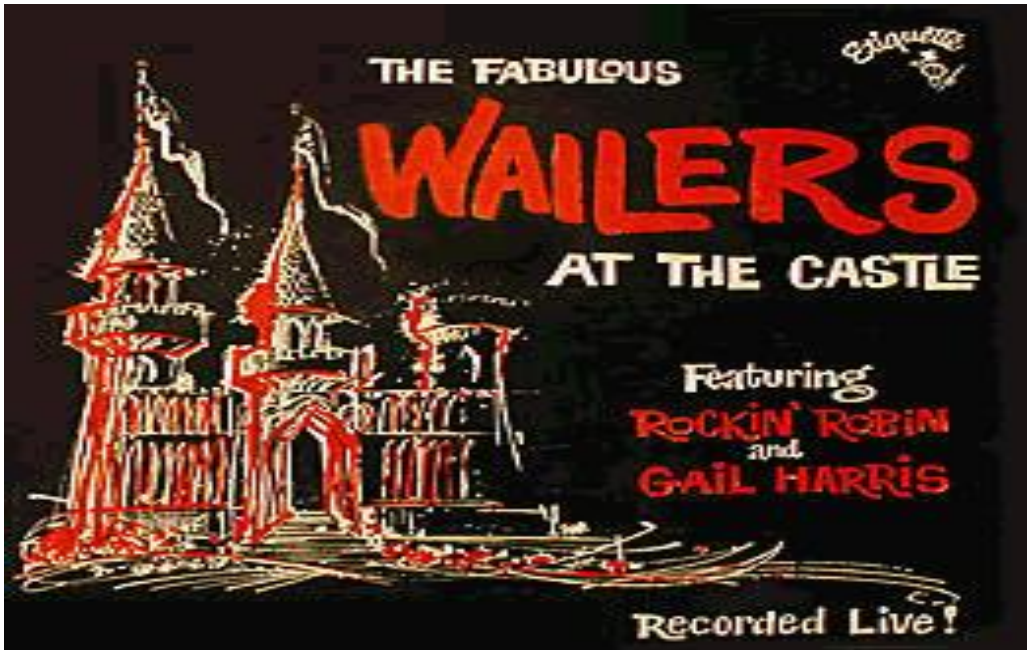
[51] The latter song rose to number 36 on the *Billboard* Pop Chart. Whitburn, *Top Pop Singles*, p. 746.

[52] Peter Blecha, "Etiquette Rules! The Northwest's Reigning '60s Garage-Rock Record Company," *History Link.org Essay*, 10 April 2009. http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8947 [accessed 28 July 2011].

Etiquette Records emblem. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.historylink.org)



Cover of the 1962 Wailers' album, *The Fabulous Wailers at the Castle.* (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.historylink.org)

The Sonics, a band that became important in the region, formed in 1963. Aggressive, rough, and raw, The Sonics exemplified the tenets of garage rock. The band was signed to Etiquette after John Ormsby saw the band performing in,

tellingly, their garage. As Ormsby remembered, The Sonics "played this real raucous rock 'n' roll song that [band member] Gerry Roslie wrote. Remember all the dance songs like 'Do the Chicken?' I said, 'that was the best thing I heard all day. I don't want to date anything here by having it a dance song that's going to come and go. Rewrite the lyrics and I'll come back.' I went back and it was the song "The Witch." I said, "That's it – we're going to record *that.*" Peter Berg was reluctant to play the song on KJR until other stations had charted "The Witch." When that happened, Berg agreed to see The Sonics perform. When he did see them play, Ormsby related, "he was knocked out, came back, played the record. In about a week, it went up to number two on [KJR]." Once again, connections among bands, labels, and radio personalities resulted in the launching of musical careers.[53]

While The Sonics played regional standards such as "Louie Louie," and cover versions of songs by local comrades The Wailers, (as well as another Richard Berry number called "Have Love Will Travel"), the band added fierceness to the music that other contemporary bands lacked. In addition to a sharper musical edge, the band wrote dark lyrics not typical of garage bands, with titles such as "Strychnine," and "Psycho." Other groups sang of pining for a girl's affection, while The Sonics warned the listener of a dangerous woman in "The Witch," who was "gonna make you itch/ 'cause she's the witch." Another song, "The Hustler," criticized men that took advantage of "all the chicks," through physical aggressiveness and materialism, or, being "big and tough" and having "a car that's never been shot down." The hustler's policy on romance was to attract

[53] Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* pp. 12-13.

girls and afterwards ignore them, ("He loves them/ Then he leaves them"). No responsibility was taken for the impact this had on the slighted lover: "The hustler knows what's going on/ Don't ever tell him that he is wrong/ Sometimes the girls go out of their mind/ 'Cause he treats them so unkind."[54]

The Sonics. (Source: *Google Images*, http://nitro-retro.blogspot.com/2011/12/listen-or-download-here-skinny-minny.html)

With songs like these, The Sonics built a strong regional following, and also impacted musicians from as far away as England. Pete Townshend saw the

[54] The Sonics, "The Witch," http://www.lyricstime.com/the-sonics-strychnine-lyrics.html [Accessed 25 November 2009], and the Sonics, "The Hustler," http://www.lyricstime.com/the-sonics-strychnine-lyrics.html [Accessed 25 November 2009].

Sonics perform while his band The Who was on its first tour through America, and he related to interviewer Barbara Walters a few weeks later that The Sonics' show stood out during his time in the country.[55] Despite this, the band failed to translate the attention into national success. Perhaps this was because of the group's unpolished, rough image, or because the band's songs had themes that dealt with the negative side of relationships, human nature and life in general; subjects such as these were not overly marketable at the time.[56]

Even switching to Etiquette's local competitors Jerden Records and working on new music at Gold Start Studios in Los Angeles did little to push The Sonics into the mainstream. Although The Sonics were unable to become a popular sensation, the band benefited from the Pacific Northwest milieu's institutions. Indeed, while the factors were in place to support a vibrant regional scene, the music community served as a medium of opportunity and agency for youths. For some, it was the chance to perform on stage, while others participated as audience members, or organized and promoted shows. This extended further into the business side of the industry, in recording music and running independent labels. With the milieu developing as the baby-boomers came of age, it provided a soundtrack to the sense of distinctiveness and generational division, especially heightened by instances where the youths were able to "do it themselves," such as the case of Etiquette Records.[57]

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[55] Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 14.
[56] Blecha, *Sonic Boom*,pp. 186, 191-193.
[57] This meant that youths were directly involved with production of musical products rather than only in consumption of commodities, and aided in the development of an identity and style unique to the Pacific Northwest.

The popularity of the regional music scene, however, was not sustainable. The factors that allowed it to flourish in the first place disappeared. Reisdorff sold Dolton Records in 1963, and the label was finished by 1967.[58] The Spanish Castle was closed down in 1966, and Berg's local promotions company that oversaw the teen dance circuit lost its hold on the market the following year. Competition and business decisions overrode community cohesiveness. 1968 saw the end of Etiquette Records. Furthermore, bands again started leaving the region to further their careers; The Frantics relocated to San Francisco, and Paul Revere and the Raiders travelled to Los Angeles to begin tenure as the house band on the television programme *Where the Action Is,* hosted by Dick Clark.[59] For white garage rock bands to succeed in the American market, they had to relocate to industry centres such as Los Angeles, just as black musicians had done earlier.

The decline of Pacific Northwest regional milieu occurred when bands and local institutions such as record labels and venues that had acted as a foundation for the area either migrated elsewhere or disappeared altogether. The regional like-mindedness that allowed the community to flourish splintered apart. This meant the cohesiveness of a shared scene, sound, and sense of purpose disappeared. The above serves, then, as an example of the ebb and flow of local music communities; many elements come together at a particular time to cause a critical mass where attention is invoked from outside of the region, and has implications for popular culture on a large scale.

[58] Blecha, "Dolton: the Northwest's First Rock 'n' Roll Record Company."
[59] Humphrey, *Loser,* pp. 11, 13.

"Some folks like water/ Some folks like wine/ But I like the taste of straight Strychnine."[60]

Despite its decline, the Pacific Northwest garage rock milieu influenced bands from fledgling music communities in other regions and time periods. In the case of the New York City underground punk milieu of the mid to late 1970s, The Sonics' gritty musical style crossed geographical and temporal boundaries to inspire younger artists seeking to express their feelings of alienation and disaffection with American society at the time. Nihilism was rampant in the underground New York scene, and songs from The Sonics catalogue matched perfectly to these later bands' sentiments.[61] For example, The Sonics' 1965 song "Strychnine" had the chorus, "Some folks like water/ Some folks like wine/ But I like the taste of straight Strychnine."[62] This outlook was also articulated by the Ramones, perhaps most notably in their aptly-titled song, "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue."[63] Furthermore, New York City bands such as Television and the

[60] The Sonics, "Strychnine," Etiquette Records, 1965.
[61] This nihilism, while perhaps not destroying the social system or revolutionary in the traditional sense, did highlight the disaffection with society. This may not have changed the status quo, but provided a voice that questioned its existence. Much of this nihilism was shaped by the changes the United States suffered in the 1970s. By this time, the participants in the 1960s' counterculture had become the major consumers of mainstream culture. The expected economic opportunities in America that the boomers and the post-1945 generation had enjoyed were declining with the weakening of the auto industry and the rising influence of OPEC, which began to make its presence felt in 1973 in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War. At the same time, the United States suffered military defeat in Vietnam. Furthermore, the dignity of the presidential office was shaken after the resignation of Richard Nixon. Three pillars of American life, economic growth, military strength, and the sanctity of the presidential institution were put into question. The founding myth of American exceptionalism suffered, as its image of being a shining city upon a hill lost lustre.
[62]The Sonics, "Strychnine." http://www.lyricstime.com/the-sonics-strychnine-lyrics.html [Accessed 25 November 2009]. One can trace a connection between these lyrics and New York City milieu participants such as Richard Hell, whose band Television was responsible for the song "Blank Generation" and the words "I belong to the blank generation/ And I can take it or leave it each time." Furthermore, other community members such as the Cramps paid direct homage to their Pacific Northwest predecessors by covering "Strychnine." Revealingly, The Cramps keep the essence of the song's musical structure intact.
[63] The chorus of the Ramones' song was: "Now I wanna sniff some glue/ Now I wanna have somethin' to do/ All the kids wanna sniff some glue/ All the kids want somethin' to do." For

Cramps were influenced not only by the Sonics' darkly playful lyrics, but also their loose, screeching and gritty sound that placed raw emotion over musicianship. In an interview with *The Rocket*, The Sonics' member Rob Lind related: "everything that was technically right was technically wrong for us."[64] Centred more on an attitude than playing ability, this same sonic style was an overriding factor of the punk scene that formed in New York City, a decade after "Strychnine's" arrival.[65] Springing from the milieu at CBGBs in New York City, a network of underground music communities arose across the United States and Canada. It formed on the periphery of American culture from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. This network coalesced around the alienation and nihilism felt by

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another example, the lyrics sung by Paul Westerberg of the Minneapolis band The Replacements, delved into this theme as well. The song, "Bastards of Young," tapped into the self-deprecating mood of Generation X, exclaiming "we are the sons of no one/ bastards of young" as an anthem. Listeners across the country related to Westerberg's words. For example, Missy Roeback, a fan of The Replacements, remembered that Westerberg, "sounded raw and fragile and desperate and pissed. He sounded like I felt. I was twenty-three, two years out of college [in 1986], slowly suffocating in a conservative New England town, not sure of what I wanted to do with my life, but sure that I needed to get out of Hartford. I went to work at my soul-sucking insurance company job in my purple hair and black clothes. I was confused and angry and sad and not really sure why. At the time, I couldn't even describe these feelings – I just knew that everything was wrong. 'Unsatisfied' made me feel like someone else got it. *This is how it feels.* This is how I feel. It took me a few more years to escape the suffocating town and quite a few more to start putting a name on my feelings. Songs like "Unsatisfied" and [other Replacements' songs] 'Answering Machine,' and later on, 'Aching to be,' didn't give me all the answers, but they helped me feel less alone in the world." Jim Walsh, *The Replacements: All Over but the Shouting*: *An Oral History* (Minneapolis: Voyageur Press, 2007), pp. 33-34.

[64] Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 14.

[65] Just as Seattle's black community had the Black and Tan, and the Pacific Northwest milieu had the Spanish Castle, the New York City punk milieu had CBGBs. CBGBs stood for Country, Bluegrass, Blues, and Other Music for Uplifting Gormandizers," or CBGB & OMFUG" or "CBGB" for short. Acts such as the Ramones, Television, Patti Smith, The Cramps, and Blondie all took the stage at the venue. Just as grunge became an umbrella term a decade and a half later, the label 'punk' homogenized a diversity of musical styles and temperaments. Much has been written on the reasons behind the New York City punk milieu's musical return to the basic tenets of rock and roll. Essentially, musicians and artists, who became nihilistic about 1970's America and the overblown excesses of popular contemporary bands, reverted to a style of musical performance that stressed passion over talent. Driven by nostalgia, members of the punk scene aspired to return rock and roll to its basic elements in direct contention to the popular music of the time For easily accessible accounts, see Nicholas Rombes, *A Cultural Dictionary of Punk, 1974-*1982 (New York City: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2009), and Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (New York: Groove Press, 1996).

its participants, which stemmed from a myriad of social and political factors.[66] The expression of this sense of boredom continued into the 1980s and through the rest of the United States. Additionally, although Clark Humphrey argued in *Loser* that there was no connection between the Sonics, the bands at CBGBs, and subsequently the Seattle scene in the 1980s, there was a shared attitude among them all. Furthermore, by tracing that attitude through the Cramps covering the Sonics in 1980, as well as common themes of the music of each milieu, proved there were, in fact, links.

By the 1970s, while underground communities around the country were benefiting from the influence of bands like The Sonics, the music milieux in the Pacific Northwest had lost its inventive nature; bands playing original music in innovative spaces and venues were replaced by a pub circuit with groups performing little other than unoriginal covers. These bands were controlled by management companies that demanded Top 40 renditions over originality, since safe music kept pub owners happy.[67] The loss of the translocal teen-dance network also meant the loss of a regional identity that united youths in the area.

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[66] Showing the influence of the Pacific Northwest, this was exemplified by the contrast between its participants' versions of Richard Berry's "Louie Louie." The jovial style common in boomer covers from the Pacific Northwest garage rock milieu was replaced with a rougher tone. Lyrics to the song were never the same aside from the chorus, but the later bands' verses were much darker and self-deprecating. For example, the Los Angeles' band Black Flag's version included the lines, "You know the pain/ That's in my heart/ It just shows/ I'm not very smart/ Who needs love/ When you got a gun/ Who needs love/to have any fun." Other bands to cover "Louie Louie" from the underground network included the Patti Smith Group and Iggy and the Stooges. For the milieu's members, the song exemplified disaffection with both their environment and their position in it. These participants found purpose and agency not by engaging with pre-existing mainstream institutions, but rather, by creating an underground American music scene, cognizant of and rebelling against society's dominant and hegemonic values. Just as Woody Guthrie and his contemporaries had ridden the rails during the Great Depression, these later tramps felt they had no place in an era of materialism and glamour, and so they travelled around the country unnoticed and marginalized by the mainstream, seeking out their own methods of empowerment. This empowerment was drawn from the local music communities these individuals came from.

[67] Blecha, *Sonic Boom,* pp. 221-222.

Instead of the personal flair applied by earlier bands to "Louie Louie," musicians were expected to perfectly imitate popular rock songs like Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven," and Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water." Additionally, racism still stifled black musicians; according to Seattle music writer Clark Humphrey, for blues guitarist Robert Cray to perform in the city's Pioneer Square, he had to front an all-white group. In addition, local record labels were unable to tap into the marketable sounds as Dolton and Etiquette had, and regional bands had to vie for major label attention. Also, studios catered to established names in the industry wanting to record in Seattle, such as Elton John and Tower of Power, rather than local bands that lacked the means to afford the expensive studio bills.[68]

Changes in local radio also negatively impacted the music community. By the end of the 1970s, independent FM radio stations had been replaced by the 'album-oriented rock' (AOR) format across America. This only sharpened the standardization of products for mass consumption. Nineteen-year-old Lee Abrams starting consulting for one radio station in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1972. Abrams had the idea to change the format; the station no longer played 'Top 40' singles. Instead, the station focused on 'the superstars' of rock and roll, such as the Rolling Stones, and by this time, the famous and late Jimi Hendrix. The format called for playing various songs from these artists' albums that were not released as singles. Rather than having the airwaves transmit a diverse range of music, only songs by the most popular artists were broadcast. The chances were better that the casual listener would hear a group they were familiar with and

[68] Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 26, Blecha, *Sonic Boom*, pp.221-224.

would therefore be more likely to stick with that station. But, album-orientated rock stations reduced the number of musicians making it onto the airwaves.

The format, though, was incredibly popular and profitable. Abrams consulted for more than 100 radio stations by 1979, and many of the remaining markets were controlled by imitators who had co-opted Abrams idea.[69] Music being marketed as a commodity by FM stations was, of course, not a unique occurrence. In this form, however, it severely limited the ability of artists who were not in the top echelon of the music business to achieve mainstream attention. Additionally, it made competition between local stations, such as what occurred in Seattle in the early 1960s with various versions of "Louie Louie," obsolete. Local Seattle FM stations such as KISW and KZOK instead garnered listeners with bands from overseas like Australia's AC/DC and Britain's Led Zeppelin rather than add regional groups to their playlists.[70] This had an impact on the music community, as the guitarist for a glam theatre troupe called Ze Whiz Kids, Rick Pierce, noted: "the Seattle crowds then had a provincial attitude – they liked anything if it was from somewhere other than Seattle. In Seattle, the opening was, 'you're from here, so you can't be any good.'"[71]

This prevalent outlook in the region did not prevent some youths from breaking the musical mould by the mid-1970s. Other than Ze Whiz Kids, the

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[69] Danny Goldberg, *Bumping into Geniuses: My Life Inside the Rock and Roll Business* (Toronto: Gotham Books, 2008), pp. 119-120.

[70] Blecha, *Sonic Boom,* p. 223. Humphrey asserted in *Loser* that Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" was the most heavily played song in Seattle for over a decade. Furthermore, he mused that later bands from the grunge era cited AOR format bands such as Van Halen and Black Sabbath as major influences because when the youths were teenagers they lacked access to other music. Humphrey, *Loser,* p. 26.

[71] Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 15. Glitter, or glam rock, originated in Britain through musicians like David Bowie, and stressed a flamboyant, androgynous style of performance. For further reading, see: Stuart Lenig, *The Twisted Tale of Glam Rock* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010).

contemporary local milieu was not offering much foundation for fledgling youths with creative ideas. Musicians were instead inspired by outside sources, and bands from the 1960s' garage rock community. As Seattle guitarist Bill Rieflin remembered:

> '75, I was fifteen years old – there was no music scene. I was in a band called the Telepaths, and as far as I know, we were really the first, so-called underground, punk inspired group. Fairly nihilistic in outlook – inspired by the Stooges and the [Velvet Underground]. When we discovered The Sonics, the world became even more exciting. A very interesting combination of people, mostly teenagers...we weren't a bar band...mostly we wrote our own songs and made a lot of noise.[72]

Opposition to the cultural status quo in the Pacific Northwest was difficult. As Rieflin asserted, however, Seattle had a disjointed underground music scene that benefited from earlier trailblazers such as The Sonics, and the cultural transmission from other regions that were part of the underground American network. The network functioned through its participants creating means of communication between different areas of the country. This was done through traditional methods - record labels, radio programs, and touring. This was also conducted through fanzines and venues. Venues, as argued before, were important because they created spaces of meaning and allowed for music communities to have a foundation. Fanzines delved into underground milieux and were vital because the publications enabled those not be exposed to the actual music to at least be aware of its existence. Fanzines were self-published magazines that originated amongst science fiction enthusiasts in the 1930s. In subsequent decades, the practice of self-publication spread to other genres, and by the late 1970s had an important role in informing the underground music community.

[72] Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 16.

Fanzine publication matched the tenets of DIY, and was borne out of necessity. At this time, if a band was not able to tour, be played on the radio, or release albums, it was extremely difficult for its music to be heard across the country. Instead, aspiring musicians could only learn about a new band and what they were doing in fanzines and through word of mouth. Thus, images of bands such as The Ramones from New York City were more accessible than their music. Until one actually heard the band, they had to create the vital sonic aspects themselves. In this way, inspiration was high but imitation low.[73] An impression of the attitude was attained, but the musical blanks had to be filled in. Locations could then develop their own regional sonic style, while still feeling a connection with a larger community.[74]

Fanzines served the purpose of promoting and informing those within the scene, not only inside their specific region, but the punk community as a whole. *Flipside*, for example, began publication on 28 August 1977 in Los Angeles with a press run of 100 copies. In the first edition, *Flipside* ran a story on local act The Germs, covered a live show at the Sunset Strip venue Whisky a-Go-Go, interviewed the glam band Eulogy, and had record reviews and a gossip page. Immediately then, the fanzine became a source of information to its readership on bands, venues, and scene participants. Al Flipside, who began the fanzine, reflected back on the first issue ten years later:

> ...the first issue, put together over the summer of 1977, was inspired by

[73] At least regionally, as it was possible for bands performing together to imitate each other's sonic styles, considering their close proximity.
[74] Marc Spitz and Brendan Mullen, *We Got the Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of L.A. Punk* (New York City: Three Rivers Press, 2001), p. 53.

> boredom, and an underground music scene that was yet to explode. All five of us were veteran concert goers and club hoppers who had nothing else better to do while waiting for a good show to come up (in those days it could be weeks!) The shows that did happen were filled with a unique bunch of people-probably the biggest concentration of talent ever to be assembled as an audience; everybody had something to offer the scene. Most people were in bands, if not they did magazines, owned stores, did artwork, etc. It was a scene that begged to be contributed to, and ripe with contributors. We had seen fanzines from England (*Sniffin' Glue*, *Ripped & Torn*) that covered their local underground, and were determined to do the same service to our scene which, at the time, lacked a real punk directed publication. (*Slash* not having it's [sic] first issue out at Flipside's inception, but did beat us to the presses!) All of us were friends, and somehow connected with the local music scene. X-8 and Tory were in Low Budget, who made their Hollywood debut playing over the Dils at the Whisky. Larry Lash was in a weird Quick sort of band, Pooch was in a progressive(!) band, and I was their friend, couldn't play anything, but still wanted to be involved.[75]

By February 1984, when *Flipside #41* was released, the publication had a press run of 7500, and interviews were done with 13 bands or musicians.[76] It included polls on various subjects from 1983, from best band, the Suicidal Tendencies, to favourite political slogan, "Reagan Der Furher, We need someone newer." While maintaining a regional focus, *Flipside #41* also looked at the Australian punk scene and current events.[77] Readers were able to stay informed about the local scene while being exposed to information regarding the global punk community.

Fanzines were released in the Pacific Northwest as well. Starting in 1978, two publications, *Stelazine* and *Snot Rag*, focused on the local music community, and provided a medium to share information amongst its participants, and to

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[75] *Flipside* No. 1, http://www.flipsidefanzine.com/Flipone.html [accessed 25 November 2009]. Flipside not being a musician himself but still playing an integral role within the scene highlights the various parts people played in developing underground institutions.
[76] *Flipside*, No. 41, (Whittier: February 1984).
[77] *Ibid.*

readers across the country.[78] Fanzines, such as *Factsheet Five*, were dedicated to reviewing other fanzines, and allowed writers to find out about each other and exchange their publications. For example, in *Factsheet Five,* which began in 1982, a mailing address and ordering information for each fanzine listed were included.[79] In this way, fanzines acted as a hub for the underground community, allowing its members to communicate, and be creative. In contrast to the indulgent arena rock music of the time with bands like AOR stalwarts Led Zeppelin that emphasized escapism over reality, and excess over contemplation, fanzines documented communities in a particular moment, and gave those that could not connect with mainstream values another avenue of expression. Participation was important, not consumption, and that tenet was also stressed throughout the underground music scene.

Buffered by local and outside fanzines, the early Seattle punk community required spaces of performance. Venues where bands could perform at that time were not the stereotypical musical halls, and certainly not the large stadiums that contemporary mainstream acts were playing in. Community halls, parks, abandoned factories and warehouses, or the basement of a home in the suburbs could all play host to an underground show. Very much in the DIY spirit, "venue" was the name given to the space where underground bands played, and that included a diverse range of possibilities. With no teen dance circuit in place, no all-age venues in existence, and no bar owners willing to take a risk on punk music, shows were organized outside the normal channels. On 1 May 1976, three

[78] Blecha, *Sonic Boom,* p. 235.
[79] Mike Gunderloy and Cari Goldberg Janice, *The World of Zines: A Guide to the Independent Magazine Revolution,* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 4.

local bands, The Telepaths, The Tupperwares, and Meyce, played at a community hall. The show was the first official local punk event, was self-promoted and organized along the DIY tenets. One of the bands performing, the Tupperwares, contained members of Ze Whiz Kids, including Tomata du Plenty, who was instrumental in organizing a number of early punk shows.[80] Finally, in 1978 a punk venue called The Bird opened in Seattle on 4 March, and was operated by Roger Husbands, the manager for a local punk band called the Enemy. The band performed at the opening show for The Bird, as did The Mentors and The Telepaths.[81] As Bill Rieflin remembered, the venue offered performance space to a diverse range of bands "doing any number of things – pop tunes, maybe weirdly Beach Boys – inspired, hardcore punk, singer-songwritery guys, experimental guys, older guys, younger guys."[82]

Just as the musicians performing at CBGBs had been inspired by The Sonics, youths in the Pacific Northwest were helped by the institutions and touring of groups throughout the American underground network. While many local acts often played the venue, many out of town bands also headlined shows at The Bird. This was because, as Vancouver band DOA's Joey Keithley remembered, Seattle was part of a West Coast circuit between Vancouver and Los Angeles:

> We went down [to California] all the time, and would stop in Seattle and Portland on the way down or the way back, and played all these towns like

[80] Jacob McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses* (Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2011), p. 7, Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 15.
[81] McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, p. 23.
[82] Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 17. This range of acts showed the encompassing nature of the underground, where restrictions were not placed on musicians, but allowance of expression was stressed.

> San Francisco and play with Dead Kennedys, Black Flag, later on the Circle Jerks....It was a circuit. For us, that was the way to go. Get to California in one day, or three days to get to Toronto. And plus you have to battle the wind and snow for four or five months of the year.[83]

Vancouver's underground music community at the time was well developed, with local record stores, labels and venues supporting the bands from the scene. Keithley asserted that was the major difference between the thriving centres of the underground, such as Los Angeles, Vancouver and New York, and the undeveloped Seattle scene.[84] Without those institutions firmly in place, bands could not gain a foothold locally, let alone see their music gain the distribution levels necessary to break out to a wider audience.

The Bird proved to be unsustainable, and was closed before 1978 was over.[85] The inability of venues to stay in operation was less of a concern to the scene than bands departing for other regions, perhaps the most telling aspect of the anaemic condition of Seattle's local scene. Predictably, many musicians departed from the Pacific Northwest to immerse themselves in music communities elsewhere. As had been the case earlier, Los Angeles was a popular destination for bands. Members of The Tupperwares left the Pacific Northwest in late 1976 to participate in the thriving California underground scene. There they

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[83] Joe Keithley, telephone interview. 25 February 2011.
[84] *Ibid.*
[85] Bands continued organizing DIY shows with no viable alternative. McKagan remembered that "[i]n the summer of 1979, I played my first real concert, with the Vains. Because we were all underage, together we rented a community center attached to a public park. The week before the show Andy [another band member] and I stole about twenty plastic milk crates from the back of a grocery store and somehow nailed plywood onto them. Now we had a stage for the gig. That alone was pretty exciting for a fifteen-year-old kid. *Our own stage.* Man, now we could play *anywhere!*" McKagan, *It's So Easy,* p. 43. Not only did this highlight the youths' ingenuity, it also stressed the importance they placed on participating in performances.

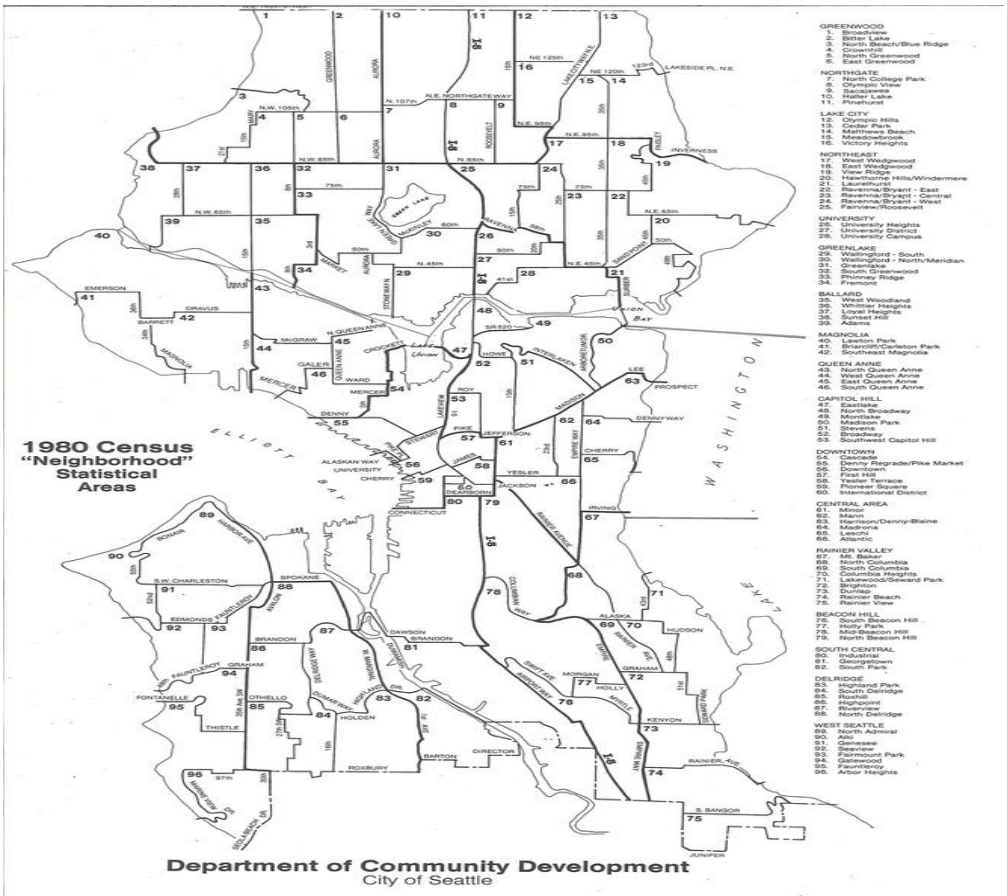
formed The Screamers, one of the most innovative bands of the era.[86] This migration of talented musicians continued unabated until the mid-1980s, when the most famous musician from the era to depart took his leave.

"seattle SCENE found DEAD"

Michael Andrew "Duff" McKagan, who was a member of The Fartz, Ten Minute Warning and numerous other Seattle area bands including The Vains, The Living, and The Fastbacks, left Seattle in August 1984.[87] That year marked a low for the Seattle music scene, with posters being put up around town saying "seattle SCENE found DEAD." Three all-age venues including the successful Metropolis had closed in 1984, and according to artist Art Chantry, "touring bands weren't coming to Seattle – it was too small of a market. What music existed was a sort of power-pop bar band sound….It wasn't a very big scene in the first place, but it really felt 'over.'"[88] Indeed, the lull in the Seattle music scene was reflected in the city's economic downturn beginning in the 1970s. Boeing, the aerospace company that had been successful in the decades following World War Two, suffered like much of the American industrial sector in the 1970s. Writer Roger Sale calculated that Boeing's 104,000 strong regional workforce was reduced in

[86] Spitz and Mullen, *Gimmie Something Better*, p. 13.
[87] McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, p. 41.
[88] Chantry saw the "seattle SCENE found DEAD," poster as evidence of the short lull in the music community's ebb and flow rhythm. Despite the closure of conventional venues, "bands like Malfunkshun and Silly Killers and Green River and Feast and Beat Happening played basements and parties and small one-night clubs that closed immediately. The people who went to these early shows were a handful of little kids that were so deep underground that the older scene didn't even notice them....A couple of years later these bands really took off and became the famous bands we all know now. This poster was a reaction to a very brief calm before the storm, y'know? And that storm was a hurricane. It's terrifically ironic, now." McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, pp. 84-85.

1970-1971 by nearly two-thirds, leaving 65,000 people without jobs. [89] Revealingly, the population of Seattle was 493,820 in 1980, when it had been 557,087 in 1960. This population drop indicates the economic recovery of the Seattle region took time, as people left for more promising areas.[90]



Map of Seattle, Census neighborhood statistical areas, 1980. (Source: *Google Images*, originally from Seattle Municipal Archive)

[89] Roger Sale, *Seattle Past to Present* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), pp. 217, 232. Humphrey estimated one-third of the Boeing positions were terminated, while the Boeing Company's website gives the statistics of a reduction from 80,400 to 37,200, or more than half. Humphrey, *Loser*, pp. 20-21, and "The Boeing Company...Dealing With Change." http://www.boeing.com/history/narrative/n070boe.html [accessed 7 February 2012].

[90] Perhaps part of the population decline was due to families departing for suburbs outside Seattle's municipal limits. This helps explain why Seattle's population dropped to 530,831 by 1970. Instead of the decline continuing, however, if the economy was stronger jobs would have brought more people from other regions to the city looking for work. This happened during World War Two, and again during the resurgence of Boeing and the rise of Microsoft beginning in the mid-1980s. Indeed, in 1990 the population of Seattle had increased to 516,259. Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, *p. 244.* Justin Henderson lists similar statistics in his work, however the population he gives for 1980 was 493,846. Justin Henderson, *Grunge Seattle* (Berkeley: Roaring Forties Press, 2010), p. 12.

Like so many other talented musicians, McKagan migrated south to Los Angeles in order to pursue musical opportunities there. He later explained his departure from Seattle:

> I didn't plan on leaving [Seattle]. What happened in Seattle in the early '80s....recession hit Seattle especially hard. There was no Microsoft – there was just Boeing. Boeing was going through some problems in the '70s, they were threatening to close down, and there were billboards around Seattle –'would the last person who leaves Seattle please turn out the light?' Basically Seattle was going to *shut down*. And it almost did in the early '80s. You'd go downtown, and I swear, it would be, like, newspapers blowing down the street. Pretty desolate....There was pretty much no place to play – except for rented rehearsal places. If you were twenty-one and over I guess there was, but it wasn't supported by the punk rock scene – because everybody was underage. That's when I bailed – in August of '84.[91]

Seattle Billboard, 1971. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.boeing.com/history/narrative/n070boe.html)

[91] Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 65.

At the same time, the scene centred on Los Angeles' Sunset Strip was reaching another crescendo. This had happened before, with the success of The Doors in the late 1960s, and again in the latter half of the 1970s with bands such as The Runaways, X, and The Germs.[92] By 1984, when McKagan arrived in the city, a milieu was germinating around glam metal bands like Mötley Crüe. The migrant stood out in Los Angeles, signifying the difference in attitude and fashion between the McKagan's old and new milieux. Before leaving Seattle, he had noticed that when California bands such as Dead Kennedys and Black Flag toured through the region, they remarked on the unique look of the audience. Once in Los Angeles, the underage McKagan used this distinctiveness to gain entry into bars by pretending he could not speak English. The doormen were fooled into thinking he was from another country rather than the Pacific Northwest.[93]

Duff McKagan performing with Ten Minute Warning. (Source: *Google Images, http://fuck-yeah-guns-n-roses.tumblr.com)*

[92] For the definitive account of the Sunset Strip scene, see: Spitz and Mullen, *We Got the Neutron Bomb*.

[93] Aside from highlighting the lack of intelligence on part of the bouncers, this showed the uniqueness of McKagan's former milieu. McKagan, *It's So Easy,* pp. 28-29.

When McKagan answered a musician classified advertisement from Saul Hudson, better known as Slash, he connected with the group that became Guns n' Roses, an underground band that garnered attention on the Sunset Strip scene and went on to worldwide fame. At the time, the mainstream music industry had its attention focused on Los Angeles, and thus McKagan, a talented musician who felt stifled in Seattle, found success through good timing and joining a band deemed marketable.[94] This was another example of the transmission of musical talent and ideas between regions, adding outside influences to the ebb and flow of particular locations. For Seattle, the cost of the development of these interconnections was a steady draining of local talent throughout the 1970s and mid-1980s, until the Pacific Northwest once again rose to prominence within the constantly shifting trans-American music scene.[95]

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[94] Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 66. Interestingly, when McKagan returned to Seattle with Guns n' Roses to open for The Fastbacks on Saturday 8 June 1985 (but ended up playing a smaller show on 12 June instead), many were less than impressed with his new band. Mark McLaughlin related, "I don't remember much except they butchered a couple of [Rolling] Stones songs. I couldn't believe that Duff quit Ten Minute Warning and moved to L.A. for this. They did get way better." Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 66. John Leighton Beezer, from local band The Throw Ups, perceived McKagan as the overriding factor in the band's improvement, saying "based on what I do know about Guns n' Roses, he went down there, was looking for a band, found some reasonably talented musicians, and kicked them into shape...I see Duff as basically the guy that went down there and preached the gospel to the savages. Guns n' Roses making it was the first indication that whatever we were onto was for real." Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 66. Admittedly, the statements from McLaughlin and Breezer contained elements of regional bias, but this attested to the fact that McKagan had been performing music in Seattle just as proficiently as he was in Los Angeles. What Los Angeles had that the Pacific Northwest lacked was a foundation as a music industry centre, and the institutions required for mainstream success. For McKagan's recollection of his return to Seattle, (including his band's failed attempt to burn down the venue after the owner refused to pay the guarantee), see McKagan, *It's So Easy*, pp. 69-80.

[95] Seattle record label Sub Pop founder Bruce Pavitt reflected on his time working with Duff McKagan in a restaurant kitchen after he moved to Seattle in 1983: "I remember seeing him put pecans on a heavily-iced cake and he looked up at me and he said, 'I'm going to move to LA and become a rock star." And I said, 'Well, good luck Duff. Why don't you just hang out in Seattle and become a rock star?' And he says, 'There's no way you can make any money playing music in Seattle, so I'm gonna move to LA and make a living as a musician.' And a couple of years later, he came back to town as the bass player in Guns N' Roses, and the next thing you knew, they became pretty much the biggest band in America. It was interesting to witness that. At the time, if you wanted to make money doing music, the idea of going to LA to do it kinda made sense, and he

This chapter has traced the highs and lows of regional music communities in the Pacific Northwest, from late-1950s through the 1980s. As the baby-boom generation began to exercise more consumer power, more cultural emphasis was placed on their interests. The advent of rock 'n' roll segmented mainstream society as swing music had in the 1930s and 1940s. Youths wanted to enjoy themselves, while the elders were concerned the new genre offered avenues of subversion, as shown by The Kingsmen's "Louie Louie" scandal. In the Pacific Northwest in particular, the popularity among white teenagers of teen-dance music played by their peers translated into a vibrant local music community, and a viable industry. Although black musicians had created a thriving scene in earlier decades, the timing, technological innovation, and marketability needed for them to expand commercially had not been in place. With the white garage rock scene these factors coalesced, resulting in the regional scene cresting. This community maintained its mainstream appeal as long as its institutions, such as the Spanish Castle and Etiquette Records, were able to keep the scene from fragmenting. When the scene collapsed at the end of the 1960s, many in the community went back to the status quo imposed by the fashions of mainstream music centres, drifting away from innovation, risk-taking, and creative expression. A small underground milieu remained, subsisting on the transmissions from like-minded people from other regions in a growing country-wide network. Musicians

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proved his point. But at the same time, the vision that I was carrying, and other close friends of mine were carrying, that if you actually stayed where you lived and cultivated over a period of time, that you could do the same thing. And that's what we wound up doing with Sub Pop Records, and Nirvana and Soundgarden and everything else." McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, p. 41.

travelled to other regions, such as Los Angeles, in this circuit to take advantage of the more developed music communities there.

As the milieu declined in the Pacific Northwest, other regional music scenes developed across the country, and by the late 1980s an underground network existed. This circuit of communities gave individuals opportunities not otherwise available; most importantly they were a means to express themselves and raise a voice of their own, through their own institutions. As the 1980s progressed, these institutions, such as record labels and stores, venues, fanzines, and radio stations, helped to cultivate a network that was comprised of local scenes in various stages of development. While one particular scene was nearing its apex, another was fragmented and just beginning to coalesce. Due to the overall growth of the underground institutions, the network continued to expand throughout the 1980s despite some regions experiencing a comparable decline to that of the garage rock milieu of the 1960s' Pacific Northwest. It was the institutions and participants in this network that helped lay the groundwork for another regional music industry arising in the Pacific Northwest. In the early 1990s musicians no longer *left* Seattle to pursue opportunities elsewhere; instead, people migrated from other areas of the country *to* Seattle.

This chapter also showed that the phenomenon known as "grunge" emerged from an American translocal punk community, and was also influenced by the local garage rock milieu of the 1960s' and the punk milieu of the 1980s. The next chapter will examine how the Pacific Northwest again reached a pinnacle in the ebb and flow course of music communities. This pinnacle was also

a surfacing for the underground network, and its institutions as well. Learning from the other music communities in the circuit, from its bands, to its record labels, to its fanzine publications, the participants in the Seattle music scene turned a small milieu into a worldwide cultural phenomenon. This phenomenon was a culmination of the efforts of countless participants from multiple local scenes within the network. Reaching this peak was not a simple transition; it was a complex inter-relationship of timing, technological innovation, and marketability. It was also an instance where the community overcame local challenges, such as those put in place by the Seattle authorities. It also highlighted alternative voices to the baby-boomer's narrative in American culture, and its hold on mainstream institutions. For the first time, the grievances of Generation X were articulated, most notably through reluctant heroes like Eddie Vedder and Kurt Cobain.

Kurt Cobain faces the crowd. (Source: *Google Images*, http://blogs.sfweekly.com/)

Chapter Three: "I feel Stupid/ and Contagious/ Here we are Now/ Entertain us:" The Rise and Fall of Seattle's Underground Milieux, 1980s-1990s[1]

On 10 September 1991, when these words were first heard by young listeners in the United States, they articulated the sense of disaffection that plagued the members of Generation X.[2] Nirvana, with their song "Smells Like Teen Spirit," became the voice of a demographic that felt itself marginalized in American culture. Unlike the baby boomers**,** united by rock 'n' roll, later teen culture became splintered into different tastes, fashions, and styles.[3] Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" co-opted the name of a popular deodorant and reframed its meaning; 'teen spirit,' in the context of the song, expressed a connection between disaffected youth as well as a separation from their elders. By focusing on timing, marketability, and innovation, this chapter will examine how the alternative culture of the American underground milieu moved into the popular gaze, brought about most specifically by Nirvana, and the Pacific Northwest music community and its institutions that served as the band's foundation. In

[1] Nirvana, "Smells Like Teen Spirit," DGC, 1991.

[2] The term "Generation X" signified the estrangement of the post-baby boom generation. The "X" referred to a lack of purpose, or definition that earlier American generations had. Archie K. Loss, *Pop Dreams: Music, Movies, and the Media in the 1960s* (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), p. 188. In their 1991 work on American generations, William Strauss and Neil Howe classify the generation as people born from 1961-1982, and the Boom Generation as those born from roughly 1943-1960. In the former's case, they do not give the cohort a name, and instead refer to them as the "Thirteenth Generation" since they are the 13th group in the authors' generational cycle. This cycle began with the Puritan Generation of 1584-1614 of which John Winthrop, who declared "we shall be as a city upon a hill," was a member. This declaration became the foundation of American exceptionalism. The "13ers," Strauss and Howe pointed out, were "the first babies American women took pills *not* to have." Both boomers, the two authors claimed that "the portrait" of the first wave of 13ers from 1961-64 is "unflattering" and that "America is dealing with a troubled cohort-group." William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future: 1584-2069* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991), pp. 31, 52, 121, 299, 317.

[3] Of course, variety existed long before Generation X. The difference was that the generation lacked a common trend to rally behind, and was instead more tribalized than cohesive.

wider terms, it will connect this to the grievances of Generation X overall. The success of Nirvana and other bands meant that musicians did not have to migrate away from Seattle to further their careers. Instead, the hopeful migrated to the city in the pursuit of musical opportunities.

Prior to "Smells Like Teen Spirit," this youth demographic had created its own underground institutions and a musical network that spanned across America, but it remained largely ignored by the mainstream. This was due to two factors. The first was the lack of commercial appeal within the milieux, and the second was Generation X inability to articulate its concerns. In the case of the first factor, the people involved were participating themselves rather than consuming a commodity produced by others, and what they created was not considered marketable. This was due to the styles and attitudes of the music milieux not matching the excess of 1980s' America.[4] The DIY ethic, discussed earlier, guided the scene's participants as they created a community separate from the driving forces of American popular culture. Before Nirvana's breakthrough, however, other Pacific Northwest bands' commercial potential pointed towards a shift in the mainstream's focus. For example, Seattle band Mother Love Bone did not have to depart the city permanently to sign a major record deal. Good timing was a factor for Mother Love Bone, forming just as the mainstream music industry was

[4] There was no place for those that dropped out of the race to accumulate commodities and wealth. For instance, the main character in Tom Wolfe's 1987 book *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, Sherman McCoy, personified the decade's emphasis on materialism and entitlement. A self-proclaimed Wall Street "Master of the Universe," baby-boomer McCoy traded stocks by day and abandoned family responsibilities to be with his mistress at night. Early drafts of each chapter were serialized in *Rolling Stone* a few years before the book's official publication. Tom Wolfe, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988). The most extreme example of a character obsessed with the dark side of the American Dream was Patrick Bateman from Bret Easton Ellis' novel *American Psycho*; Bateman was a serial killer who worked on Wall Street when not committing murders.

finding success with Los Angeles' bands Jane's Addiction, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Guns n' Roses.

Mother Love Bone. (Source: *Google Images,* http://www.feelnumb.com)

Despite each band's sonic uniqueness, Mother Love Bone benefited from bearing a similar image to Guns n' Roses, especially when singer Andrew Wood was compared with Axl Rose. Potential marketability was unquestionably a significant factor in a major label signing a new band, and Mother Love Bone had what was expected to lead to further profits for record companies. As Seattle band Soundgarden's Chris Cornell reflected: "There were dozens and dozens of the

'next Guns n' Roses signed after Guns n' Roses made it, and we were like a Jane's Addiction when we were signed. If an A&R guy didn't get the band he was after, he'd go on to the next one that was similar."[5] Once all the bands from Los Angeles that fit the image were signed, companies widened their search to other regions. Mother Love Bone, and as Cornell admitted, Soundgarden, were signed because they resembled bands from Los Angeles. Seattle musicians had again attained mainstream notice, but not for their regional style or connections within the Pacific Northwest, but instead for their similarities with bands from a traditional musical centre. It took the factors of timing, marketability and innovation coalescing to make Seattle the centre of a unique musical movement.[6]

Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" allowed for the second factor which bridged the gap between underground and mainstream: articulating the disaffection of Generation X, a demographic that was comprised mainly of suburban teenagers. Like the boomers before them, Generation X was yet another generation experiencing particular grievances produced in the time they came of age. This process alone did not make them unique, but the experience itself separated them from the previous generations. Before "Smells Like Teen Spirit,"

[5] As quoted in Kim Neely. *Five Against One: The Pearl Jam Story* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 34. After their success on Sub Pop, Soundgarden moved to the prominent Los Angeles independent label SST, run by Black Flag's Greg Ginn, and released the album *Ultramega OK* in October 1988. By the end of the year, they were signed to major label A&M. McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, p. 111.

[6] Once the success of Nirvana brought record companies, and bands hoping to be signed by them, to Seattle en masse, any groups fitting the necessary image were picked up by labels in a similar fashion to Mother Love Bone and Soundgarden. The search soon widened from the Pacific Northwest, and bands such as The Stone Temple Pilots from San Diego, Bush from London, England, and Silverchair from Newcastle, Australia were signed to recording contracts.

the generation lacked distinctiveness, which was something the boomers had in spades.[7]

Generation X's sense of alienation was worsened by the baby-boomers unwillingness to give up control of cultural institutions. Because of their numbers and their influence, they could not easily be displaced by youth. Therefore they continued to shape consumer culture and mass entertainment. For example, *Rolling Stone* magazine, which transformed from a counterculture newspaper into the authoritative voice of American music, heralded and championed the musical tastes of its own generation. This inherently selective framework retained a common narrative throughout the 1980s; coverage of contemporary bands was included, however the attention always shifted back to the heroes of the 1960s. As the decade progressed, cover stories focused on musicians such as Jim Morrison and members of the Beatles, serving to keep their music relevant.[8] At the same time, members of Generation X suffered from not having mainstream articulation of their own grievances and their own cultural forms. Many felt trapped in the suburban world of their parents, and disconnected from the drive towards conspicuous consumption. When Seattle musician Mark McLaughlin (Mark Arm) was criticized for his lyrics being angry when an affluent middle-class man should

[7] While examining generations, it is easy to sweep over the nuances within each cohort, while making generalizations about conflicts between different age groups. It is important to remember that within Generation X, there were many differences in beliefs, norms, and values. What connected them, by and large, was, like youths in most times and places, they were excluded from participating in mainstream political and social institutions, and subject to those in positions of authority. At odds with the status quo, just as the boomers had been, because it lacked a united voice.

[8] For a listing of the covers of the magazine as well as sample articles from 1967-2007, please see: *Rolling Stone: The First Forty Years* (New York: Bondi Digital Publishing, 2007).

have nothing to be upset about, he replied by asserting that "you can be pissed off and bored anywhere."[9]

Mark McLaughlin and Kurt Cobain. (Source: *Google Images, http://www.readthehorn.com/)*

The grievances of modern youth had lacked substance, or a popular symbol to rally behind. In contrast to the baby-boomers' narrative, Generation X had no Civil Rights movement, Vietnam War, Woodstock, Altamont or Kent State Shootings.[10] This "baby-bust" generation following the boomers lived in the shadow of the social and economic accomplishments of their parents with little

[9] As quoted in Azzerad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 426. [9] While boredom was a product of the modern world, members of Generation X were not the first to identify or have anxiety over it. The situationists had promoted the slogan "Boredom is always counterrevolutionary" and in 1974, while managing the New York Dolls, Malcolm McLaren (later the manager of the Sex Pistols) had a banner displayed over the band's stage that asked: "WHAT ARE THE POLITICS OF BOREDOM? Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 49.

[10] While tragedies, conflicts, protests and music festivals still occurred, they were not mythologized in popular culture in the same way, perhaps due to the narrative they were placed in by the boomer controlled-media. It could also have been due to Generation X not responding in the same way as their predecessors.

hope of the same success.[11] They also learned of the older generation's open and indulgent sexual behaviour while they were sexually repressed in the face of the AIDS epidemic.[12] Divorce among the parents of Generation X members was very high, and numerous sources point out that various members of Pacific Northwest bands came from what were termed "broken homes."[13] Kurt Cobain's aunt, Mari Fradenburgs, asserted that the divorce of Cobain's parents was devastating for the nine-year-old boy, as, "his security, family, and his own maintenance [unravelled] before his very eyes."[14] The familial network upon which his life was built was destroyed. Instead of respect and admiration for the previous generation, youths like Cobain regarded its members with mistrust; they had let him down.[15]

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[11] As they aged, the boomers had the best jobs and were holding onto their seniority. This meant the members of Generation X could only advance so far, as they were "stuck behind a wall of baby boomers." This problem continues today. Dune Lawrence and Nora Zimmett, "Generation X Stymied by Boomers." *Bloomberg*, 14 September 2011 http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-15/generation-x-stymied-by-baby-boomers-refusing-to-give-up-jobs.html [accessed 8 February 2012].

[12] The title of Nirvana's album *Bleach* was inspired by an advertisement campaign warning drug users to "bleach your works" to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS. Michael Azerrad, *Come as You Are: The Story of Nirvana* (London: Virgin Publishing Ltd., 1993), p. 5. Reed's *the Art of Protest* contains an excellent discussion of the "Act-up" movement against AIDS in New York City. T.V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 179-217.

[13] In 1990, the number of people divorced versus those married ones was 140 to 1000. In 1960, it was 35 to 1000. Coontz, *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Familes* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 31. The term 'broken' is a highly-charged term to use when describing families, but best conveys the destruction of the nuclear family in American society. For examples of the term's use in accounts on families of the time, see Azerad, *Come as You Are*, p. 5, Jim DeRogatis, *Milk It: Collected Musings on the Alternative Music Explosion of the 90's* (Cambridge MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), p. 21, and Duff McKagan, *It's So Easy: And Other Lies* (New York: Touchstone, 2011), p. 23. The term was also used in the narrative on the youth participants in the grunge scene at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio.

[14] Charles Cross, *Heavier than Heaven: A Biography of Kurt Cobain* (New York: Hyperion, 2001), p. 21.

[15] Deena Weinstein argued that this mistrust was what made the older generation lose its legitimacy. Lacking respect for their elders made it permissible for Generation X'ers to act against them. Deena Weinstein, "Alternative Youth: the Ironies of Recapturing Youth Culture," *Young*, Vol.3, No. 61. (1995), pp. 68-69. http://you.sagepub.com/content/3/1/61 [Accessed 26 March 2009]. Many notable examples from the Pacific Northwest came from "broken homes;" aside from Cobain, Krist Novoselic and Dave Grohl from Nirvana, Layne Stanley from Alice in Chains, Chris Cornell from Soundgarden, and Eddie Vedder from Pearl Jam all came from families that diverged from the nuclear tradition. A fractured family background served as a connector between

Within this discourse of limits, alienation, and abandonment, a voice for the generation began to rise. Shortly before the release of Nirvana's *Nevermind*, Douglas Coupland wrote *Generation X*, but the work only gave recognition to the existence of that sense of disaffection (and finally gave a name to the age cohort). Definition of the problem did not mean articulation of what it meant, or create a sense of unity for those affected by it.[16] Instead, it was Nirvana's "Smells like Teen Spirit" that provided a soundtrack for Generation X's estrangement, and in doing so allowed youths to connect en masse, as preceding generations had, to an attitude that was not dictated by those in control of the country's cultural institutions, but was their own.[17]

This sudden shout into the face of American culture was not as spontaneous as it appeared on the surface. This shift was the culmination of a

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these musicians; Nirvana's Cobain and Novoselic, who had tried a series of drummers, joked that they knew Grohl would be staying in the band once they discovered he had come from a broken home. Granted, it is debateable whether it is more destructive for the family unit to stay together when the parents no longer get along, but for these musicians, especially Cobain, the break up had a negative impact. Indeed, statistics pointed towards children of divorced parents being twice as likely to have difficulties as adolescents in families that stayed together. Justin Henderson, *Grunge Seattle* (Berkeley: Roaring Forties Press, 2010), p.40, Coontz, *The Way We Really Are*, p. 100. For a contemporary account of the debate over American family values, see: Arlene Skolnick, *Embattled Paradise: The American Family in an Age of Uncertainty* (USA: Basic Books, 1991).

[16] Even that much attention was unusual for the time. Clark Humphrey, writing in his contemporary fanzine *MISC.*, called Coupland's narrative "one of the first to treat folks born since 1960 as having brains." Humphrey, *MISC.*, No., 6, May 1991. *MISC.* was dedicated to reporting on "popular culture in Seattle and beyond."

[17] "Cultural institutions" refers to magazines, newspapers, record labels, and other media considered cultural authorities. One example is *Rolling Stone.* The novel *Less than Zero* by Bret Easton Ellis was a contemporary exploration of the youth sentiment of Generation X discussed above. The narrative followed disaffected teenagers as they struggled to make meaningful connections with those around them. The characters' personal relationships were marred by drug abuse, divorce and other tragedies. As shown on the back cover of the paperback edition of the book, a critic from *USA Today* called *Less than Zero* the "*Catcher in the Rye* for the MTV generation." In the novel, the youths lack an expressive outlet for the grievances caused by their circumstances, and they drift aimlessly towards disaster. Their problems went unnoticed by elders who were too engrossed in their own lifestyles of glitter and fame in mid-1980s' Hollywood. An extreme example of disaffection, the novel nonetheless showcased marginalization from the American Dream at its very heart. What it lacked, however, was an alternative to this alienation. Bret Easton Ellis, *Less than Zero* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985).

network of alternative institutions that had developed in American music communities since the mid-1970s. Evidence for how developed these institutions were was illustrated a month before the release of *Nevermind,* when the International Pop Underground Convention was held in Olympia, Washington, from 20 to 25 of August 1991. It was organized as an alternative to mainstream culture. An advertisement for the event promoted the unity of marginalized youth:

> As the corporate ogre expands it's [sic] creeping influence on the minds of industrialized youth, the time has come for the International Rockers of the World to convene in celebration of our grand independence. Because this society is sick and in desperate need of a little blood-letting; sand, sidewalk and punk pop implosion. Because the corporate ogre has infected the creative community with it's [sic] black plague of indentured servitude. Because we are the gravediggers who have buried the grey spectre of rock star myth. Because we are the misfits and we will have our day. We won't go away. Hangman hipsters, new modrockers, sidestreet walkers, scooter mounted dream girls, punks, teds, the instigators of the Love Rock Explosion, the editors of every angry grrrl zine, the plotters of youth rebellion in every form, the midwestern librarians and Scottish ski instructors who live by night, all are setting aside August 20-25, 1991 as the time. Olympia, Washington is the place. A double shot of International Hip Swing is the goal. Barbecues, parades, disco dancing, picnics and wild screaming teenage rock'n'roll are the means. Revolution is the end Revolution is the beginning. No lackeys to the corporate ogre allowed.[18]

While there were a clear denunciation of the mainstream and the "corporate ogre" in the International Pop Underground Convention, there was also an inclusiveness of those on the periphery; bands from Europe performed, and there were attendees from as far away as New Zealand. The convention was intended to connect the members of a diverse set of subcultures; the common denominator was that they were ignored by mainstream popular culture. Most important, the event blurred the lines between performer and concert attendee.

[18] Gina Arnold, *Route 666: On the Road to Nirvana* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 164.

The "stars" of the community played roles no mainstream celebrity ever would; for example, Ian MacKaye, from the headliners Fugazi, when not on stage, worked at the door of other performances taking tickets.[19] The convention functioned according to DIY tenets and did not have to rely on mainstream music institutions.

Despite the ability of the underground community to hold a six-day event that exemplified DIY values and brought participants from throughout the network together, it did not garner mainstream success; but that was not the intention.[20] The ebb and flow of the various regional milieux and the musical expression of their participants had by this time spanned years, the country, and numerous alternative institutions. Without that foundation, such a gathering would not have succeeded. While the event provided an alternative to the mainstream, it did not change the popular culture institutions in the United States. The music industry continued to be dominated by major labels, and corporate magazines such as *Rolling Stone*. For some, though, having another option, to disengage from conventional values and remain separate, was enough. A month later, however, when Nirvana's *Nevermind* was released, this separation was dissolved, whether the members of the underground community liked it or not.

Nirvana participated in the Pacific Northwest alternative music milieu, and due to a blend of the three factors necessary for regional success being in place

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[19] *Ibid*, p. 170. MacKaye had also fronted the band Minor Threat, and started the independent record label Dischord Records.

[20] Some attention was indeed given to bands such as the Replacements, Hüsker Dü, and Sonic Youth. Being connected to the underground scene, Sonic Youth was signed to a major label in the hopes that they could help discover the next big profit generator for the music industry. Sonic Youth did recruit Nirvana to Geffen, and Nirvana then went on to record *Nevermind* for the major label.

(timing, innovation, and marketability), the band was able to push through the threshold between the underground and the mainstream. The timing element can be summarized by the milieu hitting its peak in the ebb and flow cycle just as the mainstream music industry was paying closer attention to the underground. Innovations came from the alternative institutions in the region. Having learned from the bands, venues, studios, record labels, and fanzines that came before them, milieu participants combined these lessons with fresh creativity. Finally, marketability arose from creating sonic styles and attitudes that ended up matching the appetite of a large segment of the population that was consuming the products of the music industry.

Sub Pop emblem. (Source: http://www.subpop.com)

As illustrated by the image above, Seattle's Sub Pop Records had the most success constructing a viable image not only for its bands, but the label as well. Just as Nirvana was the culmination of over a decade of musical predecessors, Sub Pop built off the work of multiple underground labels before it. The label creatively constructed an image at the time it was most marketable. The fusion of boredom and alienation proved incredibly attractive.[21] As well, the idea of "the loser" gained credence in popular culture. Exhibiting tendencies in contrast to the American dream and exceptionalism, the loser embodied self-deprecation and boredom: "I feel stupid/ and contagious/ here we are now/ entertain us."[22] The above can be shown by examining the Pacific Northwest regional milieu from the late 1970s until the International Pop Underground Convention and the release of *Nevermind* in late 1991.

Despite the generational sense of discontent, this attitude centred on boredom can be traced back to boomers in the mid-1960s, to the gritty music and

[21] Despite being the most marketable at the time, boredom and alienation were not the only concerns however. A reflection of its time, the grievances in the underground network illuminated the concerns of its participants. Issues such as racism, gay rights, environmentalism, pacifism, anarchy, and immigration dominated the discourse of music miliuex. For instance, the fanzine *Daily Impulse* from San Diego reacted against many of these issues with both written columns and stylized images. This included a picture of a fence with spotlights on it, with the anti-immigration laws sentiment "No Borders! Let them come across!" Articles in the fanzine ranged from giving instructions on how to be a "Do it Yourself Punk" to the history and ideas behind anarchism. It is important to note that the information provided on being a punk was not simply what style to follow or what songs to listen to, but was instead a list of guidelines on how to become more open-minded and act according to your individual beliefs. *The Daily Impulse,* Vol. 3., No. 1., (San Diego: April-May, 1987).

[22] There was, of course, already a tradition of anti-heroes in American culture – Kurt Cobain did not appear *sui generis.* The 1920s' version was F. Scott Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby. Gatsby was a lovesick war veteran who bootlegged his way into East Coast high society. Most closely related to the disaffected and bored "loser" of Generation X was Jim Stark from the 1955 film *Rebel Without a Cause*. Played by James Dean, Stark represented a youth without direction, or at least not one that society expected him to take. Clearly at odds with his parents, authority, and the American Dream, Stark personified what was later known as "teenage angst." Later examples of the anti-hero included Randle McMurphy from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, a 1962 novel by counterculture spokesperson Ken Kesey. The character was played by Jack Nicholson in the successful 1975 film, further engraining this type of character in the popular consciousness.

lyrics of the Sonics' "Strychnine."[23] While there was certainly nihilism in professing to enjoy the taste of poison, there was also an underlying expression of yearning for something exciting, and different from the status quo. By the late 1980s in the Pacific Northwest, Nirvana was one of numerous bands conveying this attitude; however with "Smells Like Teen Spirit" they did so in a way that saw Seattle emerge as a hub for the music industry, and American culture.[24] To get to the point where it was feasible for underground Pacific Northwest bands such as Nirvana to jump into the mainstream illustrates the importance of the DIY ethic. Doing things themselves was a basic tenet of milieux participants. Individual voices and connections were being stifled in the glitter of Reagan's "Morning in America," and this extended into the music industry.[25]

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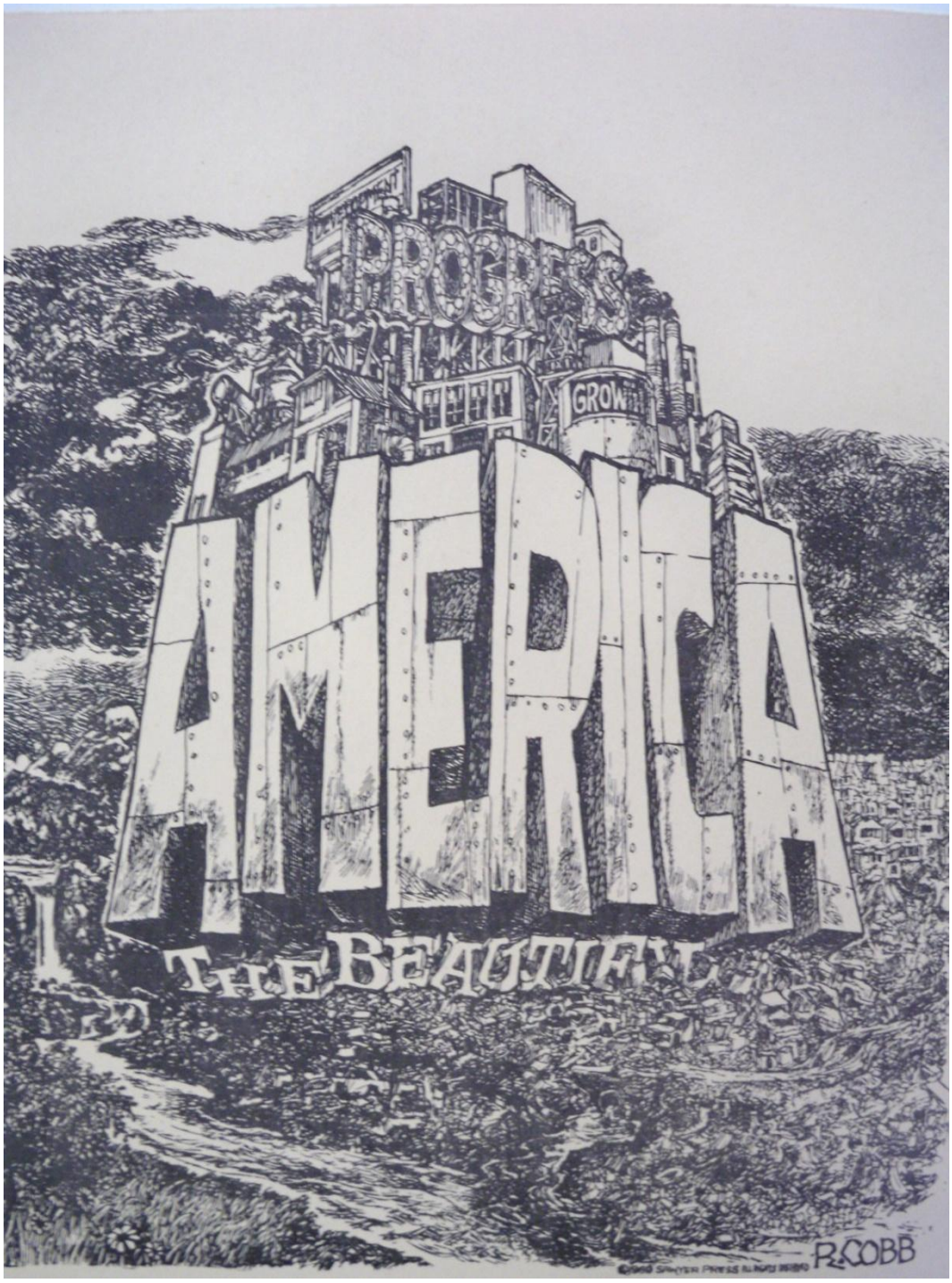
[23] Although there was the perception of sharp generational division, numerous layers of interaction existed between the boomers and Generation X. Furthermore, each generation shared similar qualities. Both reacted against authority, social injustice, and its predecessors; and a common form in which this dissent occurred was music. Additionally, Generation X was a borrowed term from earlier decades. In 1953, photographer Robert Capa used it to describe a youth culture following World War II that "signified a group of young people, seemingly without identity, who face an uncertain, ill-defined (and perhaps hostile) future." As quoted in John M. Ulrich, "Generation X: A (Sub)Cultural Genealogy." In *GenXegesis: Essays on Alternative Youth (Sub)Culture*. Edited by John M. Ulrich and Andrea L. Harris (Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 3. It was also the title of a book of interviews with Mods and Rockers in England that was published in 1964. An early British punk band took the name in 1976, after group member Billy Idol found a copy of the book. The band still rejected the previous generation in the song "Promises Promises:" The last lot made a few mistakes/ They didn't die young/ They got big waists." Nicholas Rombes, *A Cultural Dictionary of Punk, 1974-1982* (New York City: Continuum Books, 2009), pp. 102-103. Charles Hamblett and Jane Deverson, *Generation X* (London: Tandem Books, 1964).

[24] One of the other Pacific Northwest bands expressing this attitude was Mudhoney.

[25] Having been an actor previous to his public service, Ronald Reagan becoming President represented a fusion of popular culture and politics. His vision of a new "Morning in America" was a return to American values commonly associated with the 1950s, where, in the prosperous post-Second World War era, veterans had migrated with their nuclear families to the suburbs. Some saw this rebirth as the restoration of what was important in American society - namely the promotion of free enterprise and individualism domestically and abroad. When their own lives did not match this projection, others saw their voices marginalized by Reagan's rhetoric. Some then turned to the underground which was also the medium for music not congruent with this attitude. By doing so, they followed the tenets of DIY, which ironically used individualism and free enterprise, but for different aims - participation and community, not profits and consumption.



America the Beautiful? (Source: *Google Images,* originally from *Impact* fanzine)

For Generation X, coming of age in the excess of the Reagan era with its self-indulgence and materialism produced a sense of disillusion with the regular social order. This was further magnified for those marginalized by their personal

sexual, gender, political, or social identities not conforming to mainstream values.[26] In 2010, Dave Grohl reflected in a *Rolling Stone* interview that he was:

> lucky enough to grow up in Washington, D.C., and see some of the greatest hardcore [punk] shows ever….Hardcore was born during the Reagan era, when the country was undergoing this horrible conservative shift. The music inspired all us kids to say, 'Fuck you. I don't want to be a part of your system.' I thought my destiny was to work at a furniture warehouse, but then I saw hardcore bands and I realized, 'I can do this! I don't even have to be good at playing my instrument![27]

Scream, a Washington DC punk band and their audience. (Source: *Google Images*, http://blurt-online.com/news/page/240/)

[26] Rupa Huq, *Beyond Subculture: Pop, Youth and Identity in a Postcolonial World* (New York: Routledge and Francis Group, 2006), p. 139. Interestingly enough, both the counterculture of the 1960s and the 1980s had a common enemy: Ronald Reagan. In the 1960s, Reagan was Governor of California when there was significant student dissent. A generation later, he condemned the 60s as being responsible for the societal ills and economic problems facing the country in the 1980s. At the same time, it then became the justification for the shrinking of many social programs that the 1960s counterculture had championed, and the amount of taxes that the wealthy paid. These policies of diminishing the welfare state and cutting taxes were in contrast to what the 1980s' counterculture hoped to achieve.

[27] "50 Artists Pick Their Top 10s," http://www.fooarchive.com/gpb/rollingstonetop10.htm [accessed 8 October 2011]. Grohl's colourful comments highlighted the importance of local milieux in giving youth the ability to express themselves, as well as the distaste for Reagan and conservative politics among Grohl and his cohort.

Not every youth had the opportunity or desire to participate in an underground milieu in their region, especially if they lived far out in the suburban sprawl. What was readily available in the suburbs, however, was access to television. As Barbara Ehrenreich argued in her work on the 1980s, *The Worst Years of Our Lives*, the decade saw people staying at home watching television instead of being active and involved in their community.[28] Then, on 1 August 1981, Music Television, or MTV, began broadcasting with The Buggles' song "Video Killed the Radio Star."[29] The station intentionally targeted the Generation X demographic; MTV's founder, Robert Pittman, turned the idea that youth used music to form their identity into a packaged commodity. His gambit worked; by 1984, 12 million youths from age 12-24 tuned in.[30] The format of the station was to play music videos 24 hours a day, with 'video-jockeys' (VJs,), talking to the television audience between videos and introducing the music. The VJs were young, hip, and good-looking, a deliberate attempt by MTV to appeal to the youth of America based on fashion and image. The videos soon matched the presenters' stylized allure when record companies realized that the videos were helping album sales. 1.5 million dollars was spent on the video for Michael Jackson's "Thriller," the title track of an album that became the best selling of all time.[31] Overall, retail surveys showed a 15 to 20 percent increase in sales for musicians

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[28] Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Worst Years of Our Lives: Irreverent Notes from a Decade of Greed* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), p. 15-17.
[29] "MTV Changed the Music Industry on August 1, 1981." *CNN*, 31 July 1998. http://www.cnn.com/SHOWBIZ/Music/9807/31/encore.mtv/index.html [Accessed 20 March 2009].
[30] Gil Troy, *Morning in America*: *How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 128-129.
[31] "MTV Changed the Music Industry on August 1, 1981." The album itself was produced at a cost of $750,000, half the price of the "Thriller" video.

once their music was broadcast on MTV.[32] Music videos became a product of consumerism. In between videos, the television audience was inundated with gossip from the music industry. Indeed, the difference between news and entertainment was difficult to discern. At the same time, MTV redefined the relationship between an individual and one's participation in a music milieu. By the decade's conclusion, MTV was perceived as the 'most influential single cultural product" of the 1980s.[33]

TV puts a flag on the moon. (Source: *Google Images*, http://kmnnz.wordpress.com/)

The consumption of this cultural product had a significant impact on the music industry, and what was marketable. Video may have "killed the radio star," but it also killed the unattractive musician. Outward appearance became more

[32] Troy, *Morning in America*, pp. 128-129.
[33] *Ibid*.

important than it ever had in the music industry. Excess was stressed in every avenue as the adage "sex, drugs, and rock and roll" was pushed to its limits.[34] The images of trendy bands such as Van Halen and Mötley Crüe were built upon a constant melange of living dangerously, having relationships with supermodels, and not being concerned with their high rate of conspicious consumption. For audiences, escapism was an end in and of itself. While the members of these bands were not boomers, they signified another way youths were separated from popular culture, because these musicians enjoyed fantasy lifestyles unlike those of most young Americans. This image was further accentuated by the lyrics of their songs which emphasized good times. Take, for example, the lyrics to the Mötley Crüe song "Girls, Girls, Girls:" "I'm such a good good boy/ I just need a new toy/ I'll tell ya what girl/ Dance for me/ I'll keep you overemployed."[35]

Of course, it would be a mistake to make the generalization that everyone liked the same bands, or had the same values. When looking at youth culture in the 1980s it is also vital to understand that there can be no cut-and-dry divisions like asserting that "the children of the 1980s all hated president Reagan."[36] Weighing in with his own perception of the time, music writer Chuck Klosterman argued in *Fargo Rock City* that:

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[34] Reacting against the hollow conventions in mainstream rock was a tradition in the American underground. For example, when San Francisco band Dead Kennedys was asked to play a local awards show in 1980, the band wrote and performed "Pull my Strings" especially for the occasion: "I ain't no artist, I'm a business man/ No ideas of my own/ I won't offend or rock the boat/ Just sex and drugs and rock and roll." Dead Kennedys, "Alternative Tentacles, 1987.

[35] Motley Crüe, "Girls, Girls, Girls," http://www.darklyrics/motleycrue/girlsgirlsgirls.html#3 [Accessed 20 March 2009].

[36] Indeed, perhaps not all the members of the same band shared the same political outlook. For example, Johnny Ramone was a Republican and supporter of President Reagan even though the Ramones wrote anti-Reagan songs, such as "Bozo Goes to Bitburg."

> The decade of the 1980s is constantly misrepresented by writers who obviously did not have the typical teen experience. If you believe unofficial Gen X spokesman Douglas Coupland (a title I realize he never asked for), every kid in the 1980s laid awake at night and worried about nuclear war. I don't recall the fear of nuclear apocalypse being an issue for me, for anyone I knew, or for any kid who wasn't trying to win an essay contest. The imprint Ronald Reagan placed on the Children of the '80s had nothing to do with the escalation of the Cold War; it had more to do with the fact that he was the only president any of us could really remember (most of my information on Jimmy Carter had been learned through *Real People,* and – in retrospect – I suspect a bias in its news reporting).
>
> In the attempt to paint the 1980s as some glossy, capitalistic wasteland, contemporary writers tend to ignore how unremarkable things actually were.[37]

To make his childhood more remarkable, Klosterman escaped to the world of metal. He grew up in a town of five hundred in Wyndmere, North Dakota, and new music was often inaccessible. Klosterman, however, was introduced to Mötley Crüe by his older brother. Due to the image the band conveyed in the liner notes ("This album was recorded on Foster's Lager, Budweiser, Bombay Gin, lots of Jack Daniel's, Kahula and Brandy, Quakers, Krell, and Wild Women!") and an endorsement from his elder sibling ("No, they're all guys. They're really twisted, but it's pretty good music"), Klosterman related to his friends that he had discovered an "awesome new band" even before he had listened to their music.[38] Klosterman chose music that offered the fantasy of escape from his small town in North Dokota, over directly participating in an underground community exhibiting alternative values. Being an adolescent in Wyndmere might not offer

[37] Chuck Klosterman, *Fargo Rock City: A Heavy Metal Odyssey in Rural Nörth Daköta* (New York: Scribner, 2003), pp. 11-12. Klosterman was also a *young* child of the '80s. Born in 1972, he would have been eight in 1980 and still under 18 until 5 June, 1990. His memory of Reagan may have been much different than someone that was only a few years older.

[38] Perception is important, and a sign of approval from an elder brother eleven years Klosterman's senior surely had a weight to it. Klosterman, *Fargo Rock City*, pp. 8-9.

many chances to lead an excessive lifestyle, but being in Mötley Crüe certainly did.

Mötley Crüe. (Source: *Google Images*, http://stylesectionla.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/MOtley-tour-banner.jpg)

For those that did not connect with this culture of immoderation, there was no way to escape other than to separate entirely.[39] It was driven by mass consumption, instead of individuals' creativity, which was perceived as leaving little space for genuine expression, as people "bought-in" to a preordained system

[39] Jon Lewis, "The Body's in the Trunk: (Re-)Presenting Generation X." In *American Youth Cultures*, ed., Neil Campbell, (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 191-193.

rather than "thought-out" methods of their own empowerment.[40] This system had three layers. First, the 1960s' narrative remained dominant in the American consciousness of the 1980s; Tom Hayden, author of the Port Huron Statement, claimed in 1988 that "we accomplished more than we expected, more than most generations ever accomplish."[41] Second was the reminder that Generation X remained in the baby-boomers' shadow due to the consumption-driven discourse propelled by Reaganism. Finally, there was the commodification of the entertainment industry generally, and the corporate music industry specifically.

It was the network of underground music milieux that provided an alternative to this system, the crescendo of which was found in the Pacific Northwest. This regional milieu allowed for the network's music and values to be introduced into the mainstream, although the underground had originally begun in reaction against the establishment. Within the Pacific Northwest milieu were numerous local scenes, connected to each other through the region's network of venues, bands, radio stations and fanzines. These included the punk and metal scenes in Seattle, as well as the Olympia scene centred on Evergreen State College. By providing the institutions for personal expression that were not otherwise available, the Pacific Northwest music milieu took away the marginalization that the mainstream had created and replaced it with a community by connecting the likeminded. At its foundation, the milieu's institutions gave participants the opportunity to voice their values. Even if different voices did not agree with each other, they could be expressed. For instance, if a particular

[40] Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture.* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 115.
[41] As quoted in Troy, *Morning in America,* p. 145.

fanzine did not cover a certain subject, there was nothing stopping another community member from publishing one that did.

Changing the Format: DIY Innovations to Fanzines, Radio, and Record Labels

Innovations made to fanzines, radio, and record labels were vital to the development of alternative miliuex. Fanzines, as noted earlier, were not unique to the American underground in the 1980s, and they were not just devoted to music. Fanzines were published on a multitude of subjects ranging across the entire political and social spectrum - from anarchism to fascism, from veganism to white supremacy.[42] Mainly, the music fanzine community was comprised of young suburban whites, but the content was still diverse.[43]A network developed amongst fanzine writers and readers throughout the country that exposed people to a variety of beliefs and values, as well as music that went unnoticed by the mainstream press. If an underground music milieu existed in a locality, chances were a fanzine did as well. These independent publications documented the scene and elicited communication between the various regions of the American

[42] Certainly, many on the edges of these spectrums were attracted to fanzine publishing, which allowed anyone to express themselves, no matter how outlandish their views. The 54th issue of *Factsheet Five* included a review of a fanzine from Marietta, Georgia called *Crusade Against Corruption* which was quoted: "Praise God for His great Miracle of Aids! With Aids, God is destroying His enemies and *rescuing and preserving the White race*." Such fanzines were in the "fringe" section of *Factsheet Five,* which was described as fanzines that "are done by people who have very strong feelings and aren't afraid to print them. Viewing the world differently, they strive to make their voices heard at all costs." R. Seth Friedman, ed., et al, *Factsheet Five*, No. 54 (USA: January 1995), pp. 54-55.

[43] Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from Underground*, p. 7. Duncombe, a political activist in the Reagan/Bush era, was frustrated that successful social movements of the time were from the Right, while the Left languished. He believed fanzines were "a medium that spoke for a marginal, yet vibrant culture, that along with others might invest the tired script of progressive politics with meaning an excitement for a new generation." Duncombe, *Notes from Underground*, p. 3.

underground community. The Pacific Northwest benefited from, and contributed to, this cultural transmission.

The fanzine *Maximum Rocknroll* served as a source of music and political news from the periphery, keeping the participants of the Pacific Northwest milieu connected to the wider underground American network. Biographer Everett True describes how even before the band Nirvana existed, member Krist Novoselic was influenced by the fanzine. Novoselic, a participant in the Pacific Northwest punk milieu, was thereby connected to the wider community discourse.[44] Moreover, *Maximum Rocknroll* focused on bands and political views that received scant attention in mainstream channels. This illuminated marginalized groups in society that had difficulty raising awareness of their views in commercial avenues.

Started by Tim Yohannan in 1982, *Maximum Rocknroll* was originally a medium of information and communication within the local Berkeley music scene. It acted as a political forum as well.[45] Unlike *Flipside*, the fanzine from Los Angeles detailed in the last chapter, which was published intermittently, *Maximum Rocknroll* was released once a month. The fanzine had a circulation of roughly 20,000 and its readership spanned the globe.[46] Yohannan had his biases;

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[44] Everett True, *Nirvana: The Biography* (Cambridge, MA, Da Capo Press, 2007), p. 17. Novoselic remembered that fanzines "were truly independent and decentralized, in stark contrast to the mainstream media I was used to. They were part of an alternative economy promoting small, independent business. For me, punk wasn't a fad; it offered meaning in a society that didn't offer enough." This testament highlights how underground participants interacted within a community that provided outlets nonexistent in the mainstream. Krist Novoselic, *Of Grunge and Government: Let's Fix this Broken Democracy!* (New York: RDV Books, 2004), p. 12.
[45] Duncombe, *Notes from Underground*, p. 61.
[46] Jack Boulware and Silke Tudor, *Gimmie Something Better: The Profound, Progressive, and Occasionally Pointless History of Bay Area Punk from Dead Kennedys to Green Day* (New York: Penguin, 2009), p. 185.

he was a baby-boomer and a Communist who believed in the members of the next generation acting as an extension of the 1960s' counterculture. This extension, however, was on the youths' own terms, with Yohannan acting as a moral and political barometer.[47] Ray Farrell, cofounder of *Maximum Rocknroll Radio,* remembered that youths "maybe have difficulties with how their parents are raising them. A lot of those basics – how you take care of yourself, how you find a way to be happy without a lot of the trappings of a capitalist society – that's a lot of what *Maximum Rocknroll* helped kids to start to understand."[48]

The Pacific Northwest music community was affected by this cultural transmission via fanzines like *Maximum Rocknroll,* and at the same time benefited from regionally-produced publications, both mainstream and alternative.[49] The most popular music periodical at the time was *The Rocket,* a weekly magazine that was released first with *The Seattle Sun* and then *The Seattle Weekly*

[47] Much like Neil Young was considered the "godfather of grunge" by the later milieu in the Pacific Northwest, Yohannan was a paternal figure in the Bay area. Yohannan was an example of how connections across generational boundaries did exist, despite the perception of separation. Boulware and Tudor, *Gimmie Something Better*, pp. 188, 192.

[48] Farrell also worked for the independent record company SST before being employed by the major label Geffen. While a leftish bias permeated the fanzine, it also stimulated debate over issues that were of particular importance in the underground, especially in the letters section, where readers wrote in and debated everything from bands, to politics, to ways of living. Boulware and Tudor, *Gimmie Something Better*, pp. 194, 482.

[49] The cultural transmission, of course, worked both ways. Years before the milieu was dubbed the grunge scene in the mainstream media, music from the Pacific Northwest was labeled as such in underground publications. For instance, the region's distinct style was endorsed in *Flipside* in a review of a U-Men LP: "Seattles [sic] U Men churn out another grungy rock and roller. This LP is powerful and heavy in it's [sic] own style, with a lot of little surprises waiting around every bend." Al Flipside, "U Men Step on a Bug LP," *Flipside* No. 57 (Whittier: Fall, 1988). Another example from *Flipside* was a review of a Skin Yard LP that stated: These Seattle guys get right down to some heavy, ominous, dirgy grunge." Al Flipside, "Skin Yard Hallowed Ground LP" *Flipside* No. 59 (Whittier: Spring 1989). Finally, in a review of a concert at a Los Angeles venue called the Gaslight, where Skin Yard and Seattle compatriots Coffin Break performed on 10 February 1989: "Both Coffin Break and Skin Yard are from Seattle and play in a similar vein to other Seattle bands – grungy, distorted and manic. What is happening to the youth of the American Northwest? Send some of that down here!" Al Flipside, "Bulimia Banquet, Skin Yard, Coffin Break" *Flipside* No. 59 (Whittier: Spring 1989). That all three of these examples were written by the same person also indicates that people outside the Pacific Northwest were interested in promoting its regional milieu.

newspaper from 1979-2000.[50] It contained articles on the era's major acts, local bands, and editorials on the tension in attempting to balance coverage of both. Despite *The Rocket's* perceived emphasis on the mainstream, it also served as a medium for the regional community. As Art Chantry, a local artist who served as the art director of *The Rocket,* asserted:

> Everybody hated *The Rocket* because it always had a snotty attitude towards everybody. It's been kind of erased from the history, but the truth is *The Rocket* was the kiosk/information-point/gathering-point for the Seattle underground. Without *The Rocket,* half these bands would have never formed, because that's where they met each other – through the free musician classified in the back. Even Nirvana formed out of that. And Sub Pop Records began as a column in *The Rocket.*[51]

Indeed, the classified section of *The Rocket* was where Kurt Cobain and Krist Novoselic advertised for a drummer to join their band.[52] Not only did *The Rocket* serve as a conduit for the local milieu, it also discussed politics and activism. Topics that concerned Generation X were often in *The Rocket,* a logical outcome of the writers being young. Reflecting youth alienation, many articles delved into the cold war attitudes of the time, and the fear that President Ronald Reagan was leading the world to nuclear destruction. Health issues were addressed as well; even before the onset of AIDS, interviews with STD activists attempted to drive the point home with *The Rocket's* readers that safe sexual

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[50] *The Rocket* was distributed with *The Seattle Sun* from 1979 until *The Sun's* demise in early 1982. Humphrey, *Loser,* p. 47.
[51] As quoted in Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 78.
[52] Indeed, Cobain used the classified section of *The Rocket* to advertise for a drummer on numerous occasions. One advertisement read "DRUMMER WANTED. Play hard, sometimes light. Underground. Versatile. Fast. Medium. Slow. Versatile. Serious. Heavy. Versatile. Dorky. Nirvana. Hungry. Call Kurdt 352-0992." Another stated "DRUMMER WANTED. Hard, heavy, to hell with 'your looks and hair a must.' Soundgarden, Zep, Scratch Acid. Kurdt 352-0992.

practices were important and necessary, and that they were a responsibility that everyone shared.[53]

Local fanzines were published in Seattle as an alternative to *The Rocket*, and focused on the parts of the community the magazine excluded. *Desperate Times*, concentrating on the hardcore variance of punk in the early 1980s, primarily covered bands touring through the region, and secondarily the local scene. The fanzine included engagement with Seattle-area musicians; for example it published a letter submitted by Mark McLaughlin who at that time was in a band called Mr. Epp and the Calculations:

> I hate Mr. Epp and the Calculations! Pure grunge! Pure noise! Pure shit! Everyone I know loves them, I don't know why. They don't even wear chains and mohawks! They all look different, yuk! And they have no sense of humor. In fact, they have no sense. They're all pretentious, older than the Grateful Dead, and love Emmerson Lake & Palmer (my mother's fave). While my friends listen to Mr. Epp and the Calculations, I listen to Mr. Glass. His music is repetitious, redundant, and repetitive. Pure art! It's sooooo intellectual, like me. I love to listen to Philip Glass over and over and over and over again etc. ad infinitum.[54]

McLaughlin did not shy away from playfully criticizing the participants in the Seattle milieu, his own band, or himself. Indeed, as music writer Dawn Anderson noted in *The Rocket*, "Mr. Epp is noted for making fun of everything, including the hardcore scene itself." As for the style and attitude of the band, Anderson related that "Mr. Epp's song lyrics describe their political and social views, often set against a droning rhythm and strategically placed feedback. Their

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[53] John Keister, "Dial H For Herpes: New Hotline Gives Support and Referrals." In *The Rocket,* (Seattle: March 1983), p. 8.

[54] As quoted in Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 62. McLaughlin had written the letter to *Desperate Times* after the publication had asked readers to send in their vote for Seattle's "most overrated band."

noise deliberately annoys." As for a musical category, Anderson conceded, "Let's just call their screeching guitar and incoherent vocals 'experimental.'" Anderson also questioned: "Is the world ready for a band like this? Mr. Epp's hometown of Bellevue probably isn't, but in L.A. "Mohawk Man" became the most requested song on Rodney the Rock's new spot on KROQ, the city's new music station."[55] "Mohawk Man" was a song which judged people in the underground community who equated adopting the mohawk hairstyle and related fashion with embodying a nonconformist attitude. Lyrics from the song showed that some scene participants were just as critical of themselves as they were of the mainstream: "I've got a mohawk man/ I can make a scene/ I watch the others and act like them/ I'm a non-conformist/ I'm my own man/ I've got a swastika/ I show it off with pride/ I hate the police/ but I'm on the fascist side/ Got a mohawk, man."[56] These lyrics also highlight the different attitudes that mixed together in the underground milieu, and that they could be rather extreme.

Not only was McLaughlin involved in the community by performing with Mr. Epp and the Calculations, he and the band's vocalist, Jo Smitty, edited a fanzine called *Attack*, focused on Seattle music (and as Anderson related, "especially Mr. Epp and the Calculations"). The fanzine was published between 1982 and 1984, and contained local record and concert reviews, editorials on politics and fashion, as well as interviews and articles on the wider American underground scene.[57] Additionally, many of the writers for *The Rocket* also started

[55] Dawn Anderson, "Epp Perplexic," *The Rocket*, January 1983, p. 18.
[56] Mr. Epp and the Calculations, "Mohawk Man," Pravda, 1982.
[57] Ed. Jo Smitty et al, *Attack* No. 1, (Seattle: February 1982). "Attack Fanzine Indices," *Dementlieu Punk Archive*. http://www.dementlieu.com/users/obik/arc/mrepp/attack1.html

their own fanzines, in an effort to cover aspects of the local community that went beyond the range of the more popular magazine which dedicated a large portion of its space to national acts. Dawn Anderson published *Backfire* for five issues in the early 1980s, with the intention of fostering connections between the punk and metal subculture participants in Seattle.[58] Later, Anderson started the fanzine *Backlash,* which focused entirely on the local milieu.[59] As well, Seattle musician and writer Wendi Dunlap started self-publishing *YEAH!* in August 1987. Dunlap introduced the fanzine as "an alternative to the telephone pole," in reference to the tradition of promoting events through postering:

> Hi, and welcome to the debut issue of *YEAH!*, a new weekly live music newspaper. What can you expect to see in *YEAH!*? Well, we'll tell yah! Each issue will feature several reviews of recent live shows in the Seattle area; and starting with issue 2, we'll be running a regular series of interviews with local bands....Our focus is, and always will be, on local live music. We see ourselves not as competition for *The Rocket*, but as more of a weekly supplement; *The Rocket*'s focus is more broad, while we try to zero in on a more specialized topic.[60]

The intention was to fill in gaps as well as show the community from a different perspective. In addition to the reviews and interviews, the fanzine also contained a classified section, advertising space for local bands, and information on upcoming shows. These local and national examples showed the innovations to fanzine publishing, and the effort made by participants to promote the portions of

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[Accessed 8 October 2011]. McLaughlin participated in the community on many levels, also producing a local compilation album at the time, *The Public Doesn't Exist.* Dawn Anderson, "Epp Perplexic," *The Rocket*, January 1983), p. 18. Later, when McLaughlin was in Green River, he used both *Attack* and *Maximum Rocknroll* to promote the band. Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 76.

[58] Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 84.

[59] Indeed, *Backlash* proclaimed the fact directly underneath the magazine's title with the words "Seattle's local music magazine." *Backlash*, (Seattle: June-July 1988), cover.

[60] Wendi Dunlap, "What's up?" *YEAH!* (Seattle: 4 August, 1987), p. 1.

the milieux they deemed important. The existence of a diverse range of outlets, then, permitted the different expressions of the community to be enunciated.

Radio was also a vital method of communication and promotion, and often had a close relationship with fanzines.[61] Mainstream radio stations had shifted to the AOR format beginning in the 1970s, but some stations played underground music. Los Angeles' KROQ FM was notable for playing local musicians as well as acts from across the country and internationally which were not part of the AOR rotation. Rodney Bingenheimer's program on the station, "Rodney on the ROQ," which played Mr. Epp and the Calculations' "Mohawk Man," compiled a request listing from listeners that was in turn published in the fanzine *Flipside.*[62]

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[61] Indeed, when supporters of Bellevue radio station KZAM attempted to prevent a format change instituted by the owners, they organized a group called "Rescue the Rock of the '80s." From November 1979 to early 1981 KZAM played music excluded from the AOR format, including local bands. Interestingly, KZAM only began broadcasting underground music after an earlier format switch. Previously, as then disc-jockey and baby-boomer Lee Somerstein recalled: "A set of music could start with the Stones, segue to the Amazing Rhythm Aces or the Marshall Tucker Band and end up with an acoustic Eric Clapton." Many of the boomer employees left when the format switched in 1979. Along with holding an event at Pike Market venue the Showbox with fifteen local bands, the "Rescue the Rock of the '80s" group published five issues of a fanzine called *Rescue* as part of their efforts. Despite amassing a petition with 10 000 signatures, the owners changed the format to easy listening in February 1981. Humphrey, *Loser*, pp. 50, 61, as quoted in Lee Somerstein, "Recalling the Heady Days of Progressive Station KZAM," *the Seattle Times*, 1 April, 2005 http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/entertainment/2002226566_kzam01.html?syndication=rss [accessed 9 October 2011].

[62] For example, in *Flipside #41* from February 1984, songs on the request list included the local Los Angeles band Suicidal Tendencies at the top of the list and Charged GBH from England in the second position. The rest of the list was comprised of bands such as the Smiths, Youth Brigade, Iggy Pop, the Minutemen, and the Pandoras, an all-girl band from Los Angeles. The link between fanzines and radio stations went much further than publishing a request list. *Flipside* had a radio program, as did *Maximum Rocknroll.* These were distributed to radio stations across the country that would broadcast the 60-to 90-minute programs weekly. For instance, in *Maximum Rocknroll* #6, the list of stations carrying its radio program spread across the continent to 23 locations, including KUGS in Bellingham, Washington, WQFS in Greensboro, North Carolina, and CKLN in Toronto, Ontario."MRR on the Air" *Maximum Rocknroll,* No 6. (Berkeley: May-June 1983), p. 3. http://www.operationphoenixrecords.com/Maximumrocknroll/MRR-Issue006-1-Intro.pdf [accessed 4 February 2011]. The list of stations could have been longer; however, that is the number included in the publication. 10 years later, in the June 1993 edition of *Maximum Rocknroll 121*, the number of stations listed as carrying "Maximum Rocknroll Radio" was 18, and was comprised of broadcasters in the United States, Canada, Australia, and France. "Maximum Rocknroll Radio," *Maximum Rocknroll,* No. 121 (San Francisco: June 1993), p. 3, Rodney on the ROQ Top 20 Request list, *Flipside,* No. 41, (Whittier:

In the Pacific Northwest, Seattle's independent station KCMU served as a local example of the wider resistance to the AOR Format. Driven by a community focus, the station's volunteers included participants otherwise involved in the regional milieu. Those involved with KCMU included writer Bruce Pavitt, promoter Jonathan Poneman, and musicians Mark McLaughlin and Kim Thayil. Not being profit-driven allowed the stations' workers to be innovative instead of business-minded.[63]

This creativity had an impact on the regional radio industry. In a reversal from the usual trend, KISW, a Seattle commercial radio station, moved away from the album-oriented rock format and the quota of songs by local artists played on the air was increased. Cathy Faulkner, a DJ for KISW, asserted that radio shows "ended up becoming completely local and almost incestuous."[64] Just as had happened with radio in the 1960s, the music being broadcast was new, regional and unique, and it was attracting listeners away from the corporate system, a fact proven by the fact that the format change was successful.

College radio stations also began to promote music outside FM attention. In *On the Road to Nirvana,* Gina Arnold discusses how colleges all over the United States in the late 1970s concurrently began to play the music that was neglected by the AOR format.[65] In her monograph, Arnold interviewed Scott

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February 1984), p. 1. The Minutemen and Youth Brigade were also from California, while the Smiths were from England.

[63] Prato, p. 80. Clark Humphrey wrote that KCMU was the "constant in an ever-changing scene, the gathering place for everyone who cared about the music. Its volunteer DJs went on to form bands and zines and record labels." Humphrey, *Loser,* p 76.

[64] Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 81.

[65] Gina Arnold, *Route 666: On the Road to Nirvana.* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 23-24. Arnold traced college radio stations from her own school in Berkeley, to the Universities of San Francisco, Texas, Kansas, and Upsala College as they shifted from a trend of baby-boomer

Becker, who was music director at the Tufts University station, WMFO, in Boston during his tenure as a student there. Becker remembered that:

> When I was in high school in Connecticut in the mid-seventies, the AOR station seemed so hip, but then suddenly it started to dawn on me that it wasn't hip at all. It was punk rock that did it. It was just clear that there was the whole new scene and all these labels and exciting new records, and commercial radio just rejected it, totally.[66]

Olympia's college radio station KAOS also resisted the AOR format and cultivated creativity. KAOS's directors, John Foster, Stephen Rabow and Toni Holm, shifted the station's playlist towards independent music. As Rabow recalled, "Foster had developed this list of over 1000 independent record labels in the US and England. This was in 1976, when we were all frustrated with the music business. We made independent music our focus because we wanted to support people who created music out of a love for it, not to get rich."[67] Foster also developed the station's "Green Line Policy" which permitted only 20 percent of the music broadcast to be from musicians on major labels. The remaining 80 percent of the music had to be independent. Foster's efforts meant that independent music had an outlet over the airwaves, and also in print.[68]

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music programs to the creation of a network of stations that emphasized the tastes of the next generation of college students. Arnold argues that this network connected members of the underground milieu of various geographical locations with each other, "and provid[ed] all the bands within a community with a way in which to prosper. Arnold goes on to say that "the college radio effect happened at the same time in obscure tiny towns all over America – at Oberlin in Ohio, at Florida State, at Evergreen in Olympia, Washington...anyplace where there was a bunch of bored and frustrated white kids with large record collections, and one kid in particular with the will to make things happen."

[66] Arnold, *On the Road to Nirvana,* p. 24.

[67] On the suggestion of Rabow, Foster had moved to Evergreen State College at the age of 19 in 1975. From Connecticut, Foster had met Rabow when they both attended a New York boarding school. Humphrey, *Loser,* pp. 47-48.

[68] The name of Foster's innovation was drawn from him marking the independent records with a green line. In May 1980, Rabow took Foster's policy to KZAM for a weekly program called "Music for Moderns." For three hours each week he played independent music from across the

KAOS also had a newsletter, called *Op,* which was published from 1979 to 1984 and grew into a nationally-distributed music review fanzine that did not discriminate against what it covered based upon genre; the only stipulation was that the music was released on an independent record label.[69] In addition to the three original directors, the station subsequently had local volunteers such as musician Calvin Johnson, and Bruce Pavitt, (before he left Olympia and moved to Seattle and began volunteering with KCMU). For credit, while attending Evergreen State College, Pavitt started a fanzine called *Subterranean Pop,* focused on two regions of American music that were forgotten by the mainstream magazines, the Midwest and the Northwest. From 1980 to 1983, Pavitt used the extensive record library of *Op* and KAOS to trumpet regional music in *Subterranean Pop*. He also strove to undermine "the corporate manipulation of our culture," through the development of a network that spanned the entire country.[70] Soon, he shortened the fanzine's name to *Sub Pop* and started including a compilation of American music with a regional focus. When Pavitt moved to Seattle, *Sub Pop* became a column in *The Rocket*, beginning in April 1983 with the introduction:

> Hi there. SUB/POP U.S.A. will be a regular column, focusing on a different American city with each issue. Radio stations, record stores and publications that support local, independent releases will be featured, as well as clubs that book bands playing original rock, pop or soul. In the past few years, local labels have developed and expanded – I'd like to emphasize that development by highlighting the labels and well as the artists. Besides local documentation, SUB/POP U.S.A. will also include a

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country, as well as local unsigned bands. McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 31, Humphrey, *Loser,* p. 50.

[69] Humphrey, *Loser,* pp. 47-48. McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 31.

[70] Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, pp. 412-413.

> SUB 10 list of local/regional releases from around the country that deserve national/international attention. Please send me free records.[71]

The inaugural column covered the local Portland, Oregon music milieu, a local scene connected to the Pacific Northwest music community. In addition to listing the city's record labels, musicians, radio stations, venues, and fanzines, as well as new independent music from across the country, Pavitt included a narrative on Portland as well as his own opinions on the community:

> Ghost town? Portland certainly seems to be in a state of transition. First off, the Metropolis, a great all ages club that served alcohol and featured a mod, psychedelic dance floor is dead. The best alternative rock club in the Pacific Northwest will no longer feature original music. Secondly, bands are leaving. After a cassette release and a cross country tour, Pell Mell has moved to San Francisco; electronics whiz Steve Fisk is now part of their sound. Napalm Bench will also be releasing a cassette and moving to SF. The Wipers are in town to record their third LP, then it's back to New York and the big time. Right-wing combo Lockjaw will thankfully go to Texas this spring and Sado-Nation will tour California in May. Also, the infamous Neo Boys have officially dissolved; pick up their EP before it goes out of print![72]

The description Pavitt gave of Portland reveals a common account of local milieux in the underground of America. Sustaining venues that allowed all-age events as well as original music was difficult, as was retaining bands that were pursuing further opportunities. Pell Mell, Napalm Bench and the Wipers all departed Portland for more significant music industry centres. Pavitt also slipped politics into the account, when he referred to "right-wing combo Lockjaw," that was departing for Texas. While lamenting the negative aspects of the Portland scene's current condition, Pavitt refrained from calling it a "decline" but rather a "transition." What is clear from Pavitt's writing is that in his time at Evergreen and in Seattle, he had studied the elements of the American underground and

[71] Bruce Pavitt, "SUB/POP U.S.A." *The Rocket,* April 1983, p. 30.
[72] *Ibid.*

understood that there was an ebb and flow to a milieu's lifecycle. Pavitt later used this knowledge as a foundation in promoting the Seattle scene, he knew there was potential for other venues to open that accommodated original music instead of top 40 covers, and for local institutions to develop that could foster local bands. A long-term problem highlighted in the last two chapters, the difficulty was keeping the bands in the area once their development exceeded normal parameters for a regional milieu. This was the problem that had led musicians from the Pacific Northwest milieux of earlier decades to depart for New York City, San Francisco, and most especially Los Angeles. As will be shown later in the chapter, Pavitt's understanding of this was important in reversing that transmission pattern in the early 1990s, once Sub Pop became a Seattle record label.

It is also evident in Pavitt's column in *The Rocket* that he understood the importance of publicity for regional milieux and the advantage of immersing that promotion with a divisive theme. For example, his column on the Western United States linked into the notion of West Coast exceptionalism. Entitled "West Coast Secedes from Nation," Pavitt implied the existence of a Pacific Coast network, connecting Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, and Vancouver. The column included an interview with Joe Carducci, described by Pavitt as "part of the brain-trust at SST Records, one of the strongest independent rock labels on the West Coast." Carducci was asked: "does anybody ever talk about the Northwest down there?" He replied, "people talk about the bands they know, like D.O.A and the Fartz, the Wipers. The Fartz [a band from Seattle] are thought of

highly because of the anarchy thing."[73] Carducci's answer showed the significance of bands touring, in order to gain exposure in other music communities. It also made apparent that having a political viewpoint was an entry-point into bands; scene participants were interested in a band's lyrics and politics and not only their sound. Finally, the response implied the necessity of a column like Pavitt's; his readers had a source that introduced them to music from the wider American underground network.

The important lessons Pavitt learned as a writer were translated into business practices when Sub Pop became a record label. As mentioned, compilations of underground bands had been included with editions of *Subterranean Pop*. Pavitt returned to releasing compilation tapes in the autumn of 1986, with *Sub Pop 100*. The album contained songs from bands across the Pacific Northwest, including Vancouver, and the words "the new thing, the big thing, the God thing: A multi-national conglomerate based in the Pacific Northwest."[74] Pavitt aligned himself in the label venture with Jonathan Poneman, a musician, concert promoter, and KCMU disc-jockey.[75] Together, their intention was to market select music of the Pacific Northwest as a regional sound, with a particular image. As Poneman related to *The Rocket* in December 1986:

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[73] Bruce Pavitt, "SUB/POP U.S.A." *The Rocket,* August 1983, p. 32.
[74] Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 105.
[75] In late 1985, Kim Thayil invited Pavitt to a Soundgarden show at the Rainbow. Poneman booked shows there, and Thayil introduced them. Poneman and Pavitt decided to work together on the basis of releasing a Soundgarden album, which they did in October 1987. That Thayil endeavoured to introduce them made good sense for the community in general and Soundgarden in particular. Poneman had expressed interest in helping Soundgarden release an album by providing funds to the project, and Pavitt had been courted by the band because of his work with *Sub Pop;* the band had even recorded a six-song demo in April 1985 entitled *6 Songs for Bruce.* It is likely, however, that Poneman and Pavitt knew each other previous to Thayil's introduction since they both worked at the KCMU radio station. Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 130.

> The town right now is in a musical state where there is an acknowledgement of a certain consciousness. A lot has to do with our geographic isolation: for once that's paying off in that the bands here are developing with their intentions staying pure. In bigger cities, that all gets diluted, because so much is going on....Something's gonna happen.[76]

Jonathan Poneman and Bruce Pavitt. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.dontpaniconline.com)

Through Poneman and Pavitt's involvement in the American underground community, they realized it was vital to act like "something's gonna happen." Without building excitement and publicity within a music milieu, it was impossible to gain recognition outside of it. The partners released local band Soundgarden's debut album *Screaming Life*, in December 1987. By 1 April 1988 they were taking the attempt seriously enough to quit their jobs, lease an office,

[76] As quoted in Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 107.

and devote themselves full-time to the label.[77] From the beginning, Sub Pop's motto was "World Domination." Pavitt elaborated on the term, explaining that "when we say 'World Domination,' we're saying, 'we're from Seattle, and we don't care if the media machines are in L.A., we're going to create our own.'"[78] The two makeshift businessmen then proceeded to engage in picking out bands they considered marketable, while being conscious of what factors led independent labels to success instead of failure.

While Pavitt was still in Olympia, he met Calvin Johnson, who also volunteered at KAOS. Johnson, starting under similar circumstances to Pavitt, went on to form Beat Happening, a band that stressed emotion first, and musicianship a distant second.[79] This vital component to the punk attitude was apparent from the Beat Happening's first performance, which was at a house party where they did not have any equipment. The band played regardless, for Johnson felt that they could "proceed on their own terms," without having to rely "on equipment or technical issues to be who [they] are."[80] The band continued with this approach throughout its career, never touring with a drum kit: "our attitude was if people don't let us borrow drums then we can go grab a garbage can or

[77] Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 131. By this time they had already released Sub Pop's first EP, Green River's *Dry as A Bone* in July 1987. Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 105. Before leasing an official office, Sub Pop had operated out of a small record store called Fallout. As Matt Vaughan, owner of Seattle's Easy Street Record Store (that is still in operation today) stressed: "Fallout is essentially where Sub Pop was born. I think their office was there, behind the store for the first year or two. Those [Sub Pop] tapes were coming out of there – all those early singles – right out the back of the record store. So that gives you an idea of how influential a record store can be to what became the scene." U-Men member Tom Hazelmyer also saw the importance of independent record stores, relating: "I think one factor overlooked in the development of Seattle musically was the fact that the city had more good record stores than any city its size should normally be able to support. Places like Fallout were as vital if not more than any club at the time. I remember meeting more folks that way than in any club setting." As quoted in Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 79-80.
[78] Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 437.
[79] Cross, *Heavier than Heaven*, p. 154.
[80] Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* pp. 128-129.

cardboard box and that will do," recalled member Bret Lunsford. Indeed, Heather Lewis estimated that Beat Happening had practiced 20 times by 1988. Lyrically, Calvin Johnson carried an air of innocence, but songs were often critical of chauvinism, or even the Boomers. In "Bad Seed" Johnson sang, "the new generation for the teenage nation/ this time, let's do it right."[81]

Beat Happening: Calvin Johnson, Bret Lunsford, and Heather Lewis. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.last.fm/music/)

[81] As quoted in Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 471.

Johnson was immersed in the Olympia scene at various levels, including creating his own label, K Records, with Candice Pederson. Johnson related that the "K" stood for knowledge, and the label's attitude reflected that of Beat Happening: accessible and encompassing, unrestrictive and creative.[82] Rich Jenson, a musician on the K label, points out that Johnson was "a student of youth culture – a serious student, from World War II on, into films and music and the whole rise of an industry centered around teenagers."[83] Credited with creating an alternative community all his own, Johnson soon had followers that adopted his name: Calvinists. They also adopted an attitude of childlike naivety, avoided substance abuse, and played in each other's bands. Showing the interrelated nature of the Pacific Northwest milieu, the Calvinists had quite an effect on Cobain, who claimed "they started up their own little planet."[84] Cobain dated Tobi Vail, an ex-girlfriend of Johnson, and had a "K" tattoo inked on his left forearm.[85] The connection between the Calvinists and Cobain highlighted the interaction throughout the Pacific Northwest underground community.[86] Calvin's influence spread even further, having built a network of contacts across the world through his time with KAOS, K Records, and Beat Happening: "I thought it would be

[82] Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, pp. 454-456. Interestingly, Azerrad contrasted the attitude of K Records with Sub Pop. Where the latter was interested in "World Domination," K Records was focused upon the "International Pop Underground." Sub Pop was intent on hyping a regional brand to the rest of the world, while K was interested in fostering a global network of likeminded people.
[83] True, *Nirvana*, p. 48.
[84] Azerrad, *Come as You Are*, p. 46.
[85] Cross, *Heavier than Heaven*, p. 154, Azerrad, *Come as You Are*, p. 47.
[86] In the literary discourse, separation between artists, record labels, and genres divided participants in underground milieux. For example, a "folk" singer was considered different from a "punk" rocker. Instead of stressing commonality, differences were highlighted. What the connection between Cobain and participants in the Calvinist/K Records community showed, however, was that their attitudes were similar; even though Cobain is normally remembered as a "grunge" musician, he was heavily affected by the Olympia community.

neat," he related, "to have a place for them to get together and all hang out." As a result, the International Pop Underground Convention, mentioned earlier in the chapter, was organized by Calvin, Candice Pederson, and others in 1991.[87]

Map of the Seattle region. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.democraticunderground.com)

[87] Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 486.

Creating Spaces for Participation and Community: The Importance of Venues

The crowd at a U-Men concert. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.bothell-reporter.com/)

As important as fanzines, radio stations, and record labels were to the development of the Pacific Northwest milieu, spaces where the music could be

performed were still vital. While there were many circumstances that made operating a successful and long-running venue difficult, the division between youth and adults made it all but impossible. Although writer Kim Neely estimated that between 40 to 50 punk bands were active in the city during 1979-1981, finding venues to perform in was difficult, as authorities still hindered venues with restrictive measures.[88] For example, in 1981, the Gorilla Room, an all-ages space that had opened the year before, was closed due to liquor infractions. Local drummer Bill Rieflin attested this was not a unique occurrence at the time: "The Gorilla Room I remember didn't last very long. Places were always being opened up and closed down – by the liquor board, or the police. Anything that smacked of wildness – like a bunch of kids renting halls and playing music – was really suspect, and watched very carefully."[89]

Further difficulty in keeping venues open arose due to concerns over violence, drinking and drug use at shows amongst young audience members, which was picked up by the media and used by authorities as reasons to raise constraints against the fledging underground community. This was more a tradition than a unique occurrence. In the 1950s teenagers had faced opposition from authorities in creating performance spaces; in the 1980s, Generation X faced the same difficulty. The media scandalized the scene in embellished reports in print and on television, and framed participants as "A Menace To Be Stopped."[90] Even organizing shows at community halls, the bastion of all-age, DIY events, became difficult. After local band the U-Men held a concert at a hall in

[88] Neely, *Five Against One*, p.10.
[89] As quoted in Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 71.
[90] Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 61.

Laurelhurst, an affluent neighbourhood of Seattle, on 6 November 1981, the Laurelhurst Community Club newsletter published an article entitled "Vandalism at the Recreation Center" and related:

> What were all the police cars doing at the recreation center early last month? Well…it was rented out to a group called the U-MEN for a youth dance with certain restrictions (no liquor or Punk Rock) that got violated. The evening (Nov. 6th) turned into a mild ruckus involving fists, broken windows, and beer bottles. The police were called twice; the last time it was out you go with much resistance. Fortunately someone turned on all the lights which proved the turning point for all the varied night creatures, who snuck away muttering. Later that evening and on two successive weekends the building sustained broken windows, a smashed door, broken bottles, and sprayed on graffiti…pure coincidence?[91]

Hence, community halls stopped renting to bands thought to be associated with the unruly youths in the city. Authorities were intolerant of any violence, and venues either shut down or went back to booking bands that attracted a more docile crowd like in the 1970s. Due to their rowdy reputation, for instance, The Fartz began calling themselves Ten Minute Warning since venues refused to book them.[92]

Often, a venue could not escape political scrutiny. The Monastery, a safe space for marginalized youth, gained the attention of those who demanded places rumored to harbor drug users and prostitutes be closed. City Attorney Doug Jewett, a Republican, attempted to use the issue to gain political advantage across party boundaries with the motto "Save Our Kids."[93] The Monastery sparked

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[91] As quoted in Mark Yarm, *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* (New York: Crown Archtype, 2011), p. 11.
[92] Neely, *Five Against One*, pp. 9-10.
[93] James Bush, "Booze Sells," *Backlash*, (August-September 1988), p. 6. While the Bush article related that the Monastery kept youth "safe from street predators," Justin Henderson, who arrived in Seattle in 1991, contradicted Bush and musicians who were in Seattle in the mid-1980s with this account: "a club called the Monastery, run by some perverted religious youth creeps, got busted for feeding drugs and alcohol to homeless youth and then sexually abusing them, under the guise

debate in Seattle on how to best handle the perceived threat of youth, and the municipal government reacted with a harsh measure that delimited the teen club circuit and the music community as a whole.[94]

The Teen Dance Ordinance was signed into municipal law by Mayor Charles Royer on 31 August 1985, signifying the culmination of the authorities' reaction against all-age venues. The Ordinance was reminiscent of the municipal laws in Seattle in the 1950s which Paul Berg had circumvented with all-age dances outside of the city. Under the measure, venues had to purchase liability insurance of a million dollars and hire off-duty police officers for security. In contrast to the handling of music venues in Seattle's Central District discussed in chapter 1, the Ordinance imposed such heavy restrictions on all-ages music venues that it was not feasible for them to stay in operation. OK Hotel owners Tia Matthies and Steve Freeborn discovered that when a venue did try to abide by the restrictions, operators could still be hostage to the whims of police discretion. The police raided the hotel when it held a music event and closed it down for not having an occupancy permit and business license. When police arrived at the next event to find the proper permit and license, they instead deemed it an illegal dance hall and shut the hotel's doors again. Matthies asserted that: "it [was] real obvious

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of running dances as religious services." Justin Henderson, *Grunge Seattle,* (Berkeley: Roaring Forties Press, 2010), p. 58.

[94] Timothy Egan, "In Seattle Mayoral Race, a Sense of the Possible," *The New York Times,* 1 November 1989 http://www.nytimes.com/1989/11/01/us/in-seattle-mayoral-race-a-sense-of-the possible.html [Accessed 10 October 2011], James Bush, "Courthouse Dance," *Seattle Weekly,* 30 January 2002, http://www.seattleweekly.com/2002-01-30/news/courthouse-dance/ [accessed 10 October 2011]. Jewett later ran for mayor of Seattle in 1989 after Mayor Charles Royer retired, losing to Norman B. Rice, the first black mayor of the city.

[the police] were hassling us. They're not totally rude about it – they just don't want us here."[95]

The Ordinance regulated the music community's other venues and prevented them from functioning autonomously. Concert halls were subject to the ordinance as well; the Gorilla Gardens was the first venue to be issued a citation during a Hüsker Dü show, after which the owners closed the hall. This meant the end of an important local venue and connection to the wider underground circuit.[96] Bands continued to play where they could; they traveled to all-age venues in other cities, such as Tacoma's Community World Theater and Crescent Ballroom. These venues had relatively short lifespans as well, and bands often had to be creative with where they performed until their members turned 21, when they could frequent the Pacific Northwest tavern circuit.[97] Olympia had an all-age venue called the Tropicana, which was open between March 1984 and February 1985, before being closed after the town enacted an ordinance with harsh anti-noise measures. While it was in operation, the Tropicana served as a stop on the

[95]As quoted in Bush, "Booze Sells," p. 6. Neely, *Five Against One*, pp. 7-8. The OK Hotel reopened after the event closures as a cafe and art space during the day, with musical performances in the evening. Many local bands including Mother Love Bone and Nirvana played The OK Hotel, and it was used as a set in Cameron Crowe's 1992 film *Singles*. It closed in 2001 after sustaining structural damage in an earthquake. Melanie McFarland "Din fades: It's last call for cultural landmark" *Seattle Times*, 10 March 2001, http://community.seattletimes.nwsource.com/archive/?date=20010310&slug=okhotel10 [Accessed 10 October 2011].

[96] Bush, "Booze Sells," p. 6. Outrageously, during a Mudhoney concert at the Capitol Hill Odd Fellows Hall in 1993, the police arrived and, as promoter Dave Meinert described, "told me since kids were present and they looked like they were dancing, the event did require a [teen-dance] permit." As quoted in Bush, "Courthouse Dance," p. 6.

[97] For instance, the Tropicana, located in downtown Olympia, was in operation from 25 February 1984 until 31 January 1985. McMurray, p. 65. Bush, p. 6, Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 418.

circuit between Portland and Seattle, and local bands such as Beat Happening often performed as well as musicians from outside the region.[98]

In 1983, before the ordinance, venues such as the Metropolis were spaces available for youth to perform music. Musician Jeff Ament felt that the Metropolis "really allowed [his band] to grow. It was easy to get a show, no matter how crappy your band was….A really great, communal vibe there – almost hippie like."[99] Mark McLaughlin, at that time in Mr. Epp and the Calculations, related that:

> [The Metropolis] became an all-ages place, where punk bands could play. It was a place for touring bands and local bands alike. Mr. Epp played there – Hugo [the owner] paid us $100 the first time. We were like, "Oh my God, I can't believe we made $*100*!" The Metropolis was a musical incubator for the kids who were on the cusp of becoming twenty-one. Several of those kids would end up in Soundgarden, Green River, Girl Trouble, Skin Yard, Feast, the Melvins, and Nirvana. Buzz Osborne and Matt Lukin from the Melvins would drive out from Aberdeen almost every weekend to hang out at the Metropolis. They would crash on somebody's floor, and then go back to Aberdeen on Sunday. Sometimes they'd bring friends, like this really tall guy, who turned out to be Krist Novoselic. I'm sure Kurt [Cobain] came with them sometimes, but I didn't meet him then. They would have assorted people – ranging from total stoner freaks to future lumberjacks.[100]

While The Metropolis was in operation, the venue fostered community-building throughout the region, in an all-age and positive environment. Even so, sometimes, bands still took it upon themselves to create their own venues. The

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[98] Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 416. The Tropicana, Krist Novoselic recalled, was an accessible option for him to see punk music: "there would be shows there and it was not even an hour drive, so it was really easy. You could even take the bus from Aberdeen." As quoted in McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, p. 65.

[99] Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, pp. 71-72, 75. Other all-aged venues in Seattle included: The Crocodile Café, The Vogue, and The Frontier Room.

[100] Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, pp. 71-72, 75. Mark McLaughlin's band Mr. Epp and the Calculations was named after a high school teacher. McLaughlin would go on to play in the groups Green River and Mudhoney.

Melvins, for example, were a band that showed ingenuity in finding spaces to perform. From Aberdeen, a town of around 17,000, 108 miles from Seattle, and lacking a proper performance venue, they put on an impromptu event called "the Them Festival" in nearby Montesano during the summer of 1983. The 'festival' consisted of a free performance in the parking lot of a Thriftway supermarket. Kurt Cobain attended, and later wrote of the show in his journal, relating that while "the stoners were bored and kept shouting, "Play some Def Leppard," this was "what [he had] been looking for."[101] The Melvins' performance and Cobain's experience highlights the tenets of the underground community; inclusion and accessibility (inexpensive and no boundaries between artists and audience) and separation from popular music of the time (Cobain's reaction to the Def Leppard fans).

Once the musicians in Seattle bands started turning 21, they were able to start playing regularly in bars, such as the Central Tavern and the Rainbow Tavern, for an audience mostly made up of other bands.[102] Jeff Ament places special significance on The Ditto Tavern:

> When I think about when it really happened, I think about the Ditto Tavern. There were basically ten or twelve bands playing two or three nights a week. A bunch of great bands came out of that – Feast, Bundle of

[101] Cross, *Heavier than Heaven,* p. 45. Nirvana's first gig would be as opening act for a metal group at a house party in the town of Raymond. Bands just starting out were playing wherever they could, even in the corner of a living room. Azerrad, *Come as You Are,* 60. The members of the Melvins had a tremendous impact on Cobain, providing an alternative to the Def Leppard crowd, in a logging town without many other options. As shown by the Melvin's DIY-guided choice for the venue for the Them Festival, the members of the band were driven by the punk attitude. Novoselic reflected that this caused a divide in the Aberdeen community: "Back then, if you were into punk rock, you were really weird. And you could get beat up by the establishment people who were into the good ol' boy music and driving around in Camaros or whatever." As quoted in McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 51. Despite the danger posed by the Camaro-driving members of the Aberdeen community, the alternative attitude to expected norms gave youths like Cobain and Novoselic another choice.

[102] Doug Pray, dir. *Hype!* (Santa Monica: Lions Gate Home Entertainment, 2004).

> Hiss. It was really small – fifty to 100 people. It was a real friendly, competitive vibe. It was like, "Show us what you've got." I remember being at those shows and being psyched, like, "Wow, our little bands are getting *good*."[103]

The musicians supported each other not only in Seattle, but throughout the Pacific Northwest. In the 1988 version of Nirvana, the band had members living in different cities. Novoselic was in Aberdeen, Cobain was in Olympia, and drummer Chad Channing lived on Bainbridge Island near Seattle. The band members drove more than six hundred kilometres in a day for a three-hour practice.[104] A regional community was taking shape, and not necessarily based on similar music styles. Kurt Bloch from The Fastbacks asserted that although "the Fastbacks and the U-Men [another regional band] had nothing in common musically [they] loved each other and were great friends," which only would have served to strength the ties within the community.[105] Venues provided a strong connection between the musicians and those in the crowd, instead of large impersonal spaces where bands were clearly separated.[106] Bruce Pavitt argued that the lack of separation shows "the fact that there's a community here – it's not just this industry that's manufacturing bands, it's a happening scene where people are

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[103] Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 76.
[104] Cross, *Heavier than Heaven*, p. 120.
[105] Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 54.
[106] Photographer Charles Peterson immersed himself in the audience at numerous local performances. Peterson's work showed that separation between artists and their supporters in the small venues was nonexistent. One of his photos is from a benefit show to raise money for the Fluid, a band touring through Seattle that had its van and trailer stolen. In the frame, it is difficult to tell where the band ends and the crowd begins. At the same time, the manager of Mudhoney surfs over the crowd. Another frame depicts Soundgarden singer Chris Cornell literally in the audience while performing at the Central Tavern in 1987. Still another catches Kurt Cobain launching himself into the crowd at an October 1992 Mudhoney show where Nirvana had opened unannounced. Charles Peterson, photo. Michael Azerrad, essay. *Screaming Life: A Chronicle of the Seattle Music Scene* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), pp. 23, 48-49, 94.

feeding off each other."[107] These layers of connections did not make the milieu unique, but as with Liverpool, England, and Winnipeg, Canada in the 1960s, it ultimately helped make its bands successful.

The links within the community were countless and diverse. The members of the scene often switched roles depending on which band played on a particular day. People worked day jobs together as well. Many of the artists attached to Sub Pop, such as Mark McLaughlin and Tad Doyle, worked for a background music company called Muzak.[108] Doyle gave the Muzak warehouse credit for its role in community-building, saying "we infiltrated that place. I know it sounds funny, but that's where the Sub Pop community really started. A lot of us worked there, and we hung out together. We'd go to the same clubs, play the same places, and support each other."[109] Additionally, a shared attitude united the participants in the Pacific Northwest music milieu. As Jeff Ament reflected: "I think a lot of us grew up listening to Black Sabbath, or Aerosmith and Kiss and stuff. I think a lot of us got into the punk scene, from a playing standpoint, because we could relate to the Ramones. We could play along to "Blitzkrieg Bop."[110]

An important aspect of the community was it being participatory instead of critical. Local musician Kempton Baker was more concerned with inclusion rather than the categorization of bands, or limiting his own participation to groups that fit a certain image. Instead, Baker was active in the milieu whether the focus

[107] Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life,* p. 421.
[108] Ibid, p. 423. Others included Chris Pugh from Swallow, Grant Eckman from The Walkabouts, Tom Mick from Feast, and Bruce Pavitt. McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 101.
[109] As quoted in Neely, *Five Against One,* p. 15.
[110] As quoted in Humphrey, *Loser,* p. 76.

was glam, metal, or rock 'n' roll.[111] Many other musicians shared this attitude of acceptance. As McKagan remembered before he left for Los Angeles:

> The key thing for me was that nobody in that circle was critical of me….People didn't take themselves too seriously in the scene, either. There was a weird sense of humor. And being musically different was rewarded. It didn't matter whether a band's playing was any good; if they were striving to do something original, people would go check them out. It made for interesting and sometimes cool music. A band couldn't just look good and expect people to go to their show.[112]

Non-musicians performed various important roles as well. The lines between performer and supporter were blurred, and everyone adopted a role that best suited them, from singer to band manager to photographer to audience member.[113] Susan Silver, who worked the door at The Metropolis and booked the shows, later became manager for Alice in Chains and Soundgarden.[114] In addition, although a large portion of the musicians in the tight-knit community were male, The Fastbacks had two female members, The Gits was fronted by Mia Zapata, and the group 7 Year Bitch was an all-woman act.[115] Furthermore, while Rupa Huqa and others argue that grunge music was "in timbre and texture unrelentingly white," Soundgarden's Hiro Yamamoto, was Asian, and Kim Thayil was Native

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[111] Kempton Baker, Personal Interview, 8 April 2011, Seattle.
[112] McKagan, *It's So Easy,* pp. 42-43.
[113] For example, In May 1992 Pearl Jam attempted to hold a free Memorial Day concert in appreciation of the support the Seattle community had given the band. Given that the event would draw thousands of fans, Seattle officials were worried that their capabilities to police both the concert and holiday revelers would stretch them too thin. The show was cancelled, with the city offering to allow it to take place on a weekday, which meant many youths would be in school. In a city already discriminatory towards youths with the Teen Dance Ordinance in effect, Pearl Jam decided to wait until 20 September to hold the "Drop in the Park" concert. It was also made part of the 1992 "Rock the Vote" Presidential election registration drive, and 2,500 new voters signed up. Neely, *Five Against One*, pp. 149, 175.
[114] Plato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 72.
[115] Pray, *Hype!* Other female bands associated with the grunge scene include The Gits, L7, and Bikini Kill. They participated in the riot grrrl subculture closely associated with third-wave feminism.

American.[116] The venues played a large role in bringing people together and the shows were based on openness.

Other linkages existed, as did further examples of participants migrating *to* the Pacific Northwest. When Kim Thayil moved to Evergreen State College, he noted the benefits to participating in a regional scene over an urban centre such as Chicago. Thayil was attracted to a milieu that stressed participation over commodification, as Olympia was "a smaller town that was actively involved in that aspect of independent punk culture, whereas Chicago at the time was a lot of bar bands and blues. And it was so big. It was hard to get any sort of central thing going, or to participate in it."[117] Another example was Jeff Ament moving from Montana, with his band, Deranged Diction, to Seattle in June 1983 in order to focus upon his music career. Another member of the group, Bruce Fairweather, recalled they migrated "because we thought we would actually make it with the band."[118] Additionally, Matt Cameron, who played in numerous bands, including Skin Yard (with Jack Endino) and later became Soundgarden's drummer, moved from San Diego to Seattle in 1983. Already serious musicians, Cameron and Ament came to the Pacific Northwest at the time when Los Angeles was perceived as the centre of the music industry.[119]

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[116] Huqa, *Beyond Subculture,* p. 138.
[117] As quoted in McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 65.
[118] Neely, *Five Against One,* p. 7. Additionally, Jonathan Poneman was from Toledo, Ohio and had moved out west with a girlfriend when he was seventeen. Prado, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 25. Ament played in numerous grunge acts, including Green River, Mother Love Bone, Temple of the Dog and Pearl Jam.
[119] Prado, *Grunge is Dead,* pp. 22-23. Admittedly, the fact that musicians were choosing Seattle over Los Angeles may indicate a tendency towards regional convenience. For example, Ament was from a small town in Montana called Big Sandy, and Washington was much closer than California.

Bands like Deranged Diction chose Seattle because at the time it was the best place for them to be. Musicians are often transient by nature and move to where they find the most opportunities. In Deranged Diction's case, Seattle was chosen above the alternatives of remaining in Montana or going to California. Perhaps musicians such as Ament and Fairweather did not expect instant access into the mainstream music industry by migrating to Seattle, but instead saw other benefits in the underground milieu. It signifies the existence of a community where likeminded musicians, with a shared attitude, were active. Musicians were also drawn by Evergreen State College, an institution that fostered creativity and innovation. Musician Steve Fisk, while studying at Evergreen, was able to get permission to release music he had recorded at the school commercially and have a record label he started count for credit towards his degree. This was "unprecedented," Fisk asserted, "and indicative of the role the college was to play in [Olympia's] nascent music scene."[120] Furthermore, Los Angeles had a much more competitive structure, with musicians vying for a place on limited event bills and scarce record deals in a diluted market.[121] The chances of getting noticed were

[120] As quoted in McMurrary, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 43. This tradition also included Pavitt, Johnson and other students such as cartoonist Matt Groening who were able to combine their post-secondary degrees with original ideas and cultural output, such as fanzines. Calvin Johnson, for example, was able to tour in Japan while having the trip count as course credit by examining "how the Japanese managed their energy use." Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 465.

[121] Remnants of this competitive nature in the Los Angeles scene, (and those attempting to turn a profit from such a structure), were still found there in 2010 when I visited Sunset Strip venues. Bands had to pay the venue's booking agent for a spot on the bill, with less well-known bands performing earlier to small audiences. Artists, often from other regions of America, struggled to sustain relevance within the community if they did not make enough money through selling merchandise, since no income was coming in from gigs. Even the famous Whisky a-Go-Go, instrumental in the early Los Angeles punk scene, by this time required bands to pay a performance fee and sell a high number of tickets to ensure an audience of drink-buying participants. Revealingly, those audience members were not allowed to mosh, pogo-dance, or crowd surf during performances. The elements that had allowed the Sunset Strip to thrive from the 1960s to the 1980s had been removed, and the venues, relying on their reputation from those

higher in Seattle, and the region's underground institutions offered ample opportunities.

Cover of the 1986 C/Z compilation album, *Deep Six.* (Source: *Google Images,* http://www.endino.com/skinyard)

That the Pacific Northwest was becoming a viable alternative to industry centres was further illustrated by talented musicians no longer deciding to migrate to Los Angeles and choosing instead to remain in the Pacific Northwest. In 1986, several of these bands appeared on a compilation album entitled *Deep Six*, which

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decades, had become factories putting out musical performances for profit, but with the passion removed. In Hollywood, this "pay to play" system had been in place from at least the mid-1980s, where Guns n' Roses had to borrow money from friends to front the initial ticket cost. The band then resold the tickets to members of the local network it had developed through a mailing list compiled at earlier shows. McKagan, *It's So Easy,* p. 89.

was released on local C/Z Records, owned at the time by Tina Casale and Chris Hanszek.[122] The latter was also a recording engineer, and he booked time at the studio he owned with Jack Endino, Reciprocal Recording, to make the album. *Deep Six* consisted of songs by six local bands, Green River, The Melvins, Malfunkshun, Skin Yard, The U-Men, and Soundgarden. The release of the album inspired Bruce Pavitt, who remembered, "I had been observing all these different regional scenes around the country, and I finally got to the point where I was like, 'Wow. There's something interesting going on in this city.'" Aside from giving Pavitt insight into the potential for a distinctive regional sound, *Deep Six* also inspired a deeper sense of community, with Kim Thayil relating:

> When the *Deep Six* record was getting together, I knew that there was something going on here. We liked bands like the U-Men, and we would in our minds associate with them or Vexed or the Crypt Kicker 5 [other local bands] or Green River. But for all we knew the U-Men didn't know we existed, but they were a band we liked to go and see live. And we felt that through part of that community we had a similar audience, friends that were like-minded.[123]

When Michael "Duff" McKagan departed Seattle, he had initially been joined by Ten Minute Warning member Greg Gilmore, but disheartened by the Los Angeles scene Gilmore decided to return home after only a few rehearsals with Guns n' Roses. He later joined Mother Love Bone, whose members included Jeff Ament and Bruce Fairweather, and the charismatic singer Andrew Wood. The

[122] There were also numerous other record labels active in the mileu, such as Green Monkey, and Popllama. While *Deep Six* became the foundation for the contemporary variance of "the Seattle Sound," at the time there were many other bands that were popular in the region. These included The Posies, The Green Pajamas, The Young Fresh Fellows, and The Squirrels. All of these bands were at one time either on Green Monkey Records, or Popllama. Wendi Dunlap, Personal Interview, 7 April 2011, Seattle.
[123] As quoted in McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 95.

band, comprised of musicians already successful within the Seattle music mileu, recorded a demo at Reciprocal Recordings in February 1988.[124] The members debated whether or not to move to Los Angeles, ultimately deciding to remain in the Pacific Northwest. Bands no longer had to leave; Mother Love Bone gained industry attention without departing the region. Ament sent a demo to contacts in Los Angeles, which caught the interest of an Artists and Repertoire executive at Geffen records, Anna Statman.[125] This led to Statman traveling to Seattle to attend a performance by Mother Love Bone at the Vogue with Kelly Curtis, who later became their manager. After a successful show, Mother Love Bone was then invited to Los Angeles to meet with Geffen's president, Eddie Rosenblatt. This sparked enough interest that a bidding war soon erupted between major record labels for the right to sign Mother Love Bone, which PolyGram did in November 1988.[126] This courting process, and the local controversy over the band "selling out," was covered by the Seattle fanzine *Backlash.* In an interview with the band, writer J.R. Higgins asked them about their major label plans. Tongue in cheek, Andrew Wood replied: "we won't forget Seattle, until we all come back and we're all at the Coliseum and we're like, 'Hello Portland, How yah doin!' and

[124] Ament and Fairweather had been in Green River, as had member Stone Gossard. When Green River split up, the more alternative-minded members Mark McLaughlin and Steve Turner had formed Mudhoney, while Ament, Fairweather and Gossard joined former Malfunkshun frontman Andrew Wood and drummer Regan Hagar in Mother Love Bone. Gilmore replaced Hagar in December 1987, shortly after the band formed. Neely, *Five Against One*, pp. 30-31, Henderson, *Grunge Seattle*, p. 39.
[125] Artists and Repertoire, commonly referred to as A&R, was the division of record labels charged with finding new talent to sign to the company.
[126] Neely, *Five Against One*, pp. 30-33.

everyone boos."[127]

Timing, Innovation, and Marketability Come Together: Sub Pop Attains Nirvana

Nirvana's rise coincided with the three factors necessary for regional success, timing, marketability, and innovation. The Pacific Northwest music milieu benefitted from the connections of its institutions and the capabilities of the people that participated in the network. The community structure allowed for fledging musicians to gain agency and pursue opportunities through the local music publications, record studios, and the friends they had in other bands. It would be these grassroots connections that allowed Nirvana to first function as a band, and then sign to a major label, and finally to articulate the disaffection of a generation. For instance, on 23 January 1988 Nirvana recorded with Jack Endino after Cobain read about Reciprocal Studios in *The Rocket.* Endino was also an important musician in the milieu, knew friends of Cobain, and had recently recorded the Soundgarden EP *Screaming Life* for Sub Pop.[128] According to Dale Crover, who had booked the session at the studio and played drums on the recording, Cobain "really wanted to record there because he really liked the sound of the Soundgarden record.[129]

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[127] J.R. Higgins, "Mother Love Bone Sells Their Souls!" *Backlash* (Seattle: August-September, 1988), p. 1.

[128] The EP was reviewed in *Flipside*, with the reviewer arguing: "Well done! Weird twisted power chord rock kinda in the vein of the Cult but that's a misleading analogy. Scary without resorting to stupid Satan lyrics, a creeping pulsating sexual threatening googoo bomb. I like this a million times more than all those wanna be Aerosmiths in Los Angeles." Pat Fear, "Sound Garden Screaming Life EP" *Flipside* No. 55 (Whittier: Spring-Summer, 1988).

[129] Azerrad, *Come as You Are* p. 68. Azerrad also included the assertion that Cobain denied this was the reason, and that he chose Endino's studio because comparison shopping in *The Rocket* showed it to be the cheapest. Additionally, Azerrad also related that Endino worked on the session

After the recording session, Cobain, Novoselic and Crover traveled to the Community World Theater in Tacoma and performed the songs they had just recorded. Endino passed a demo of the songs along to Daniel House, who at the time played with Endino in Skin Yard and owned C/Z Records after purchasing the label from Hanszek and Casale. Sub Pop Records was introduced to Nirvana when Endino passed the recording along to Poneman. The importance of Endino passing the demo along to two local record label owners cannot be overstated. Cobain had sent the recording to record labels outside the Pacific Northwest, but they lacked interest in the band's demo. Pavitt and Poneman, on the other hand, saw potential in Nirvana's music.[130] In this way, as members of the community operating within the scene's network of institutions, the band was able to record songs for $152.44, a cost Novoselic and Cobain were able to muster on the latter's janitor's salary, with savvy musicians and studio staff, and then have the product passed along to the label that would sign, market, and distribute the band. Thus, a struggling duo from Aberdeen gained a start by using the local network; it allowed Nirvana to position a foothold in the region, an opportunity that would not have arisen on ability alone.[131]

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because he wanted to record Crover, due to his reputation as a talented drummer. Azerrad's narrative was later contradicted in *HYPE!,* with Endino relating that he recorded Nirvana because they said they were friends of The Melvins. Whatever the case, both versions of how the recording session came about likely contain some truth and show the importance of personal connections within the milieu's network of institutions. Furthermore, the example stresses the discrepancy in sources available on the Seattle music community, and the need to examine them in conjunction.

[130] McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* p. 105.

[131] Unfortunately, talent was tempered by those within the community that had access and authority within the regional institutions to appreciate a "hit sound," or potentially a marketable one. Azerrad, *Come as You Are*, p., 70. While the local network proved to be of benefit, the wider underground American network was as well. It allowed Novselic and Cobain to find a drummer that fit with Nirvana's style and mentality. Cobain had advertised for a drummer in the classifieds section of *The Rocket* several times, but it was Dave Grohl, from Washington D.C., who ended up becoming Nirvana's third official member. Cobain and Novoselic knew Grohl from seeing his

Nirvana: Dave Grohl, Kurt Cobain, and Krist Novoselic. (Source: *Google Images,* http://blog.muchmusic.com)

In fact, building off the foundation of community institutions and milieu participants, Sub Pop's strategy for "world domination" led to Nirvana's regional success, in terms of developing a regional image and providing a platform for bands to reach an audience external to the underground. Sub Pop preferred to release singles rather than whole albums, a manoeuvre they turned into a marketing gimmick called "Sub Pop Singles Club" where a customer paid for the music beforehand.[132] Patrons subscribed to the Club without knowing whose music they would receive. The label usually lacked the funds required to release full albums, and the Singles Club helped promote a brand and add to the company's coffers. Also, a monthly showcase was held at the Vogue called "Sub

band Scream perform in the underground circuit, and when the band broke up, Buzz Osborne from The Melvins put the three in contact. This was an example of individual connections that linked Nirvana to a national network, not just a regional one. Prato, *Grunge is Dead,* p. 274. Humphrey, *Loser*, p. 154.

[132] Pray, *Hype!*.

Pop Sunday," solidifying the label's presence within the community.[133] In the same vein as *Deep Six* and *Sub Pop 100*, in December 1988 the label put out *Sub Pop 200*, another collection of sonically-unique bands released as a regional package. This regional cohesiveness extended into all of the label's practices, including the branding of Sub Pop itself in the same manner as its bands.[134] Albums, band posters and event advertisements always included the Sub Pop image, and merchandise was sold bearing the Sub Pop logo as well. This made the label just as, or even more, recognizable than the bands on the label.[135]

Illustration of Sub Pop's regional focus. (Source: *Google Images*, orignally from *Maximum Rocknroll)*

[133] Cross, *Heavier than Heaven*, p. 99. The logo was deemed so important that when Nirvana was in negotiations with Geffen to buy Sub Pop out of their existing contract with Nirvana, as Poneman explained, "we were interested in getting the Sub Pop logo out to as many people as we could. That was just part of the settlement and agreement – for two records, which ended up being *Nevermind* and *In Utero*, that were supposed to be the second two records in the Sub Pop contract - we could get logo identification." As quoted in Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 276.
[134] McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, p. 125.
[135] Reporting on a Screaming Trees show in Jacksonville, Florida that had Mudhoney's Dan Peters playing drums with the band, John Mincemoyer pointed out the irony that "although most of the kids [in the audience] had Sub-Pop paraphernalia on, they didn't seem to recognize the immortal Dan Peters." John Mincemoyer, "Screaming Road-Trip" *Flagpole Magazine* (Athens: 26 June 1991), pp. 26-27.

Then, in what was considered a marketing coup, in early 1989 Sub Pop flew British journalist Everett True, a writer for the popular *Melody Maker*, to Seattle for a piece on the music community. While the label and its bands received scant attention in American mainstream institutions, *Melody Maker* exposed the regional milieu in the United Kingdom. True profiled bands from throughout the Pacific Northwest and created a regional narrative by quoting Poneman: "There isn't so much a Sub Pop sound, as a readily recognisable movement happening in the American North-West right now." Indeed, with journalistic flair, True hyped the stereotypes of the area, invoking images of lumberjacks in flannel playing guitars after they put down their chainsaws, which served to increase attention from the British public. This constructed an image of the Pacific Northwest. He described Nirvana as, "the real thing. No rock star contrivance, no intellectual perspective, no master plan for world domination. You're talking about four guys in their early twenties from rural Washington who wanna rock, who, if they weren't doing this, would be working in a supermarket or lumber yard, or fixing cars."[136]

The publicity ensuing from True calling Sub Pop the "lifeforce to the most vibrant, kicking music scene encompassed in one city for at least 10 years" had the desired effect. The influential John Peel, esteemed British Broadcasting Corporation disc-jockey and *London Times* writer, compared Seattle to Detroit during the Motown years.[137] Back in Seattle, the results were also apparent; when

[136] As quoted in McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* pp. 136-137. The 4th member of Nirvana was guitarist Jason Everman, who joined the band in February 1989 and left that July.
[137] Pray, *Hype!*, McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses,* pp. 136-137.

Sub Pop organized "Lamefest" on 9 June 1989, they saw the three-band bill of Nirvana, Tad, and Mudhoney sell out the Moore Theatre, a first for local acts.[138]

The implications of the Sub Pop publicity efforts were not lost on local writers. Over six months before the release of *Nevermind* and the articulation of Generation X's grievances in the mainstream, writer Grant Alden referred to it in *The Rocket:*

> Hey loser, Sub Pop shouts gleefully, peddling alienation to ever-expanding legions of disaffected youth. Join the club in which you're already a lifetime member, and give us your money for the privilege.
>
> Some nights it hurts so much that only loud music and every chemical in the bottom drawer will help, and then only for an instant. Like when you're broke, you can't get it up, your country's dropping bombs for reasons you couldn't hope to understand – because there is no reason and never was, and never really had to be. Just because, like tired parents tell their stubborn children.
>
> Which is why Sub Pop makes Tad records.
>
> Yeah, Tad, the band with that fatugly [sic] butcher from Boise bellowing into the microphone, loose jeans low beneath the crack in his ass, the whole lousy troupe making an ungodly racket. The band of rustic, wood-gobbling clowns who were too ugly for MTV. The band Sub Pop has hyped beyond all reason.
>
> Tad, see, are the archetypal losers, and their music is something like the primal scream of the disenfranchised.[139]

[138] Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life*, p. 442. A United Kingdom "Lame Fest" was held in London at the Astoria Theatre on 3 December 1989 to similar fanfare. McMurray, *Taking Punk to the Masses*, p. 153.

[139] Grant Alden, "Tad: A Loser's Meditation on the Art of Noise," *The Rocket* (Seattle: February 1991), p. 17. Since bands featuring overweight lumberjacks and butchers were not popular at the time, the members of Tad did not fit the marketable image of musicians on MTV.

Tad's "Loser" Sub Pop release. (Source: *Google Images,* http://www.pettediscographies.com)

While Poneman and Pavitt were putting more effort into marketing Tad and Mudhoney, Nirvana, also a contrast to the celebrity musicians of the day, benefited from the label's publicity as well. That, combined with their connections cultivated within the wider underground network, made them a major label prospect. Additionally, the mainstream music industry was beginning to shift attention to the underground with the success of Los Angeles bands like Jane's Addiction and the signing of Seattle's Soundgarden. Geffen did not recruit the New York City band Sonic Youth because of its promise of profitable sales. Instead, the band was signed for its standing within the underground network, and its potential to point the label towards bands that could draw a high return.[140]

While Nirvana was not expected to produce much profit for Geffen, they were signed to the label and recorded *Nevermind.*[141] Others bands like

[140] Azerrad, *Our Band Could be Your Life,* p. 233.
[141] Humphrey, *Loser,* p. 167.

Soundgarden, Mother Love Bone and Pearl Jam had also been signed to major labels, but they did not have the immediate impact on the industry as Nirvana would.[142] Nirvana's success, although built on the underground institutions that had formed during the ebb and flow of music milieux throughout America, and the countless bands that toured throughout the country since the mid-1970s, really began with "Smells Like Teen Spirit," and its accompanying music video. In it, Nirvana performed in a high school gymnasium for an audience of disaffected youth with accompanying cheerleaders with an anarchy "A" image on their outfits. At first, the crowd was disinterested, and the cheerleaders lazily go through their routine. As the video progressed, however, the audience responded to the music and reacted with expressions of their own; dancing, moshing, crowd surfing; in other words, they are adding their own voices to that of the band. By

[142] In Mother Love's Bone's case, this was due to Andrew Wood dying of a heroin overdose shortly before the release of their debut album, *Apple*. Pearl Jam formed from the remnants of Mother Love Bone, with Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard beginning to write music with Mike McCready. McCready had been in a local metal band, Shadow, which had disbanded after migrating to Los Angeles and failing to find a record deal. Through musician Jack Irons, the trio was connected with a singer in San Diego, Eddie Vedder. Irons, the drummer for The Red Hot Chili Peppers, was a mutual friend of Ament and Gossard, and had given Vedder a tape of instrumental tracks the pair had recorded with McCready. After only briefly meeting Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard in Los Angeles in September 1990, Vedder travelled to Seattle on 8 October to play with the musicians and formed the group Mookie Blaylock, later renamed Pearl Jam. Not only did Vedder discover a milieu in line with his musical inclinations and attitude, but he was also to express personal values and concerns with his new bandmates. Vedder and the rest of the band instantly connected, and quickly began recording and performing together, tackling issues in their music ranging from alienation and abandonment to suicide and domestic abuse. With Vedder's arrival in Seattle from California, he was accepted into a community still suffering from the loss of Wood, and was invited to join a tribute band to the late singer, Temple of the Dog. Showing the connections within the community, the band was comprised of many within the milieu, performing songs written by Wood's roommate, Chris Cornell. As for Irons, he left The Red Hot Chili Peppers after guitarist Hillel Slovak died of a heroin overdose in 1988; he would later join Pearl Jam for a short time after the departure of earlier drummer Dave Abbruzzese. Jonathan Cohen and Mark Wilkerson, *Pearl Jam: Twenty* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), pp. 37-39. Neely, *Five Against One*, pp. 61-65, Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 17, Anthony Kiedis with Larry Sloman, *Scar Tissue* (New York: Hyperion, 2004), p. 224. Cameron Crowe, "Five Against the World: Pearl Jam emerge from the Stage Daze of Superstardom." *Rolling Stone*, 28 October 1993. http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/5937822/ cover_story_five_against_the_world [accessed 2 April 2009].

the video's conclusion, the band, audience, and cheerleaders are on stage together as Cobain smashes his guitar. It showed the connection between the entire group; there was no separation in their declaration of "here we are now/ entertain us."[143] Generation X was finally united, the materialism of the Reagan era was undermined, and there was a popular alternative to self-indulgent and bloated arena rock.

Nirvana's success was a culmination of an underground network of music milieux that spanned the United States. This in turn furthered the mainstream success of many other bands from the regional milieu, most notably Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, and Pearl Jam. While all three bands had record deals with major labels prior to Nirvana's *Nevermind,* the surge in popularity garnered the bands and the region more attention than ever before. It also destroyed the tradition of bands leaving the Pacific Northwest to further their careers: Nirvana's success instead led to a torrent of musicians moving to Seattle; hordes of bands left music industry centres like Los Angeles to seek their own break into the mainstream via Seattle.

The youths in the Pacific Northwest preferred to participate in their own milieu rather than consume products manufactured by others. Due to the industry being dominated by the boomer narrative, the excesses of commercial bands, and music's potential for expression, it was an obvious medium to rebel against, and

[143] Kyle Anderson, writing in his opinionated narrative on grunge, argued that the audience in fact rose up and destroyed the band rather than joined it, annihilating the source of their empowerment. Like much of his work *Accidental Revolution*, however, Anderson's arguments do not match the evidence, or in this case the images, presented. While the crowd does get hold of part of Dave Grohl's drum kit, that can be perceived as there being no difference between musician and audience, blurring the lines between the glamorous and the celebrated, and those left screaming for more. Kyle Anderson, *Accidental Revolution: The Story of Grunge* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), pp. 54-55.

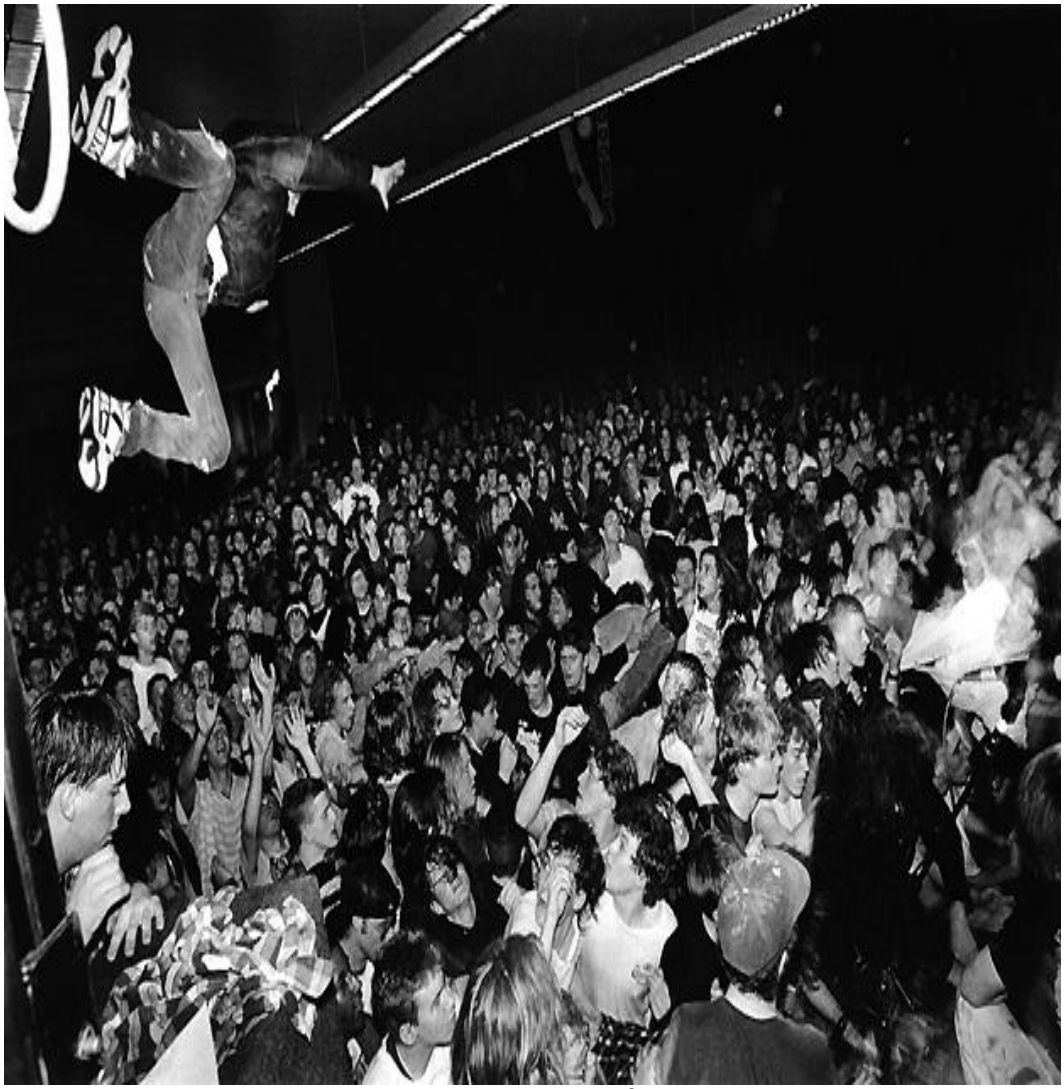
provide an alternative to. Participation in the music scene, whether it was as a musician, a fanzine writer, record-label owner or an audience member, equated with empowerment. The production of music in the myriad of layers in the Pacific Northwest music community was in sharp contrast to homogenous corporate rock - the lyrics and style of which did not unite a new generation.[144] Unification and articulation of the generation did not mean all the voices involved were the same. Diversity of expression was perhaps the most positive implication of the brief triumph of the alternative community. Politically, for writer Gina Arnold, *Nevermind's* success signaled a change in American values that were dominant in the 1980s. She remembered that when the album reached the top *Billboard* position in early 1992, her reaction was: "Bush will not be reelected."[145] Ultimately, baby-boomers retained control of mainstream institutions, with Nirvana's music absorbed into the 1960s' narrative with all the rest; but the knowledge that such upheaval was possible remained.[146] As Kathleen Hanna, frontwoman for the band Bikini Kill and pioneer of the Riot Grrrl movement, asserted: "We wanted to have a music scene that we could relate to – the same way that Nirvana functioned within the music scene." She explained:

> We were really excited to be a feminist band. A big part of our mission was to go out and inspire other girls to play music, because selfishly, we wanted a scene. One of the things grunge did for us was it showed us that there could be this strong music scene in the place we lived.

[144] Azerrad, *Come as You Are*, p. 5.
[145] Arnold, *On the Road to Nirvana,* p. 5.
[146] As discussed, *Rolling Stone* magazine was no exception to the corporate leanings of the music industry baby-boomers, even after the grunge era ended. Jann Wenner, Jim DeRogatis attested, was the champion of bands that sold well. Wenner refused to print a story DeRogatis had written about Hootie and the Blowfish, a popular band at the time, because it was not a favorable piece. DeRogatis, *Milk It,* pp. 262-263.

We just really wanted our own scene.[147]

Indeed, what they proved in Seattle was that anyone *could* have their own scene.



The crowd at a Nirvana show at the University of Washington, 1990. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.soulcatcherstudio.com)

[147] As quoted in Prato, *Grunge is Dead*, p. 306. Kathleen Hanna also had an inadvertent role in helping name the song that signaled Nirvana's breakthrough. Following a night of graffiting Olympia's abortion-alternatives center with pro-choice statements, Hanna, Tobi Vail, Dave Grohl and Kurt Cobain returned to Cobain's home where Hanna spray-painted another slogan on his bedroom wall: "Kurt Smells like Teen Spirit." Although Hanna admitted she had simply "seen the deodorant at the store and thought the name was hilarious," the events of that evening and the people involved showcased the connections within the regional milieu. As quoted in Sara Marcus, *Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), p. 49.

Conclusion: The Rise and Fall of Seattle's Music Milieux

The popular narrative of American music was written not by the creators and innovators themselves, but by those in the positions to tell the story. Invariably, this led to a disconnect between different perspectives. When exploring the discourses with the advantage of hindsight and from the side of the musicians and milieu participants, connections are discovered which have implications for American culture as a whole. The examination of three separate communities, Seattle's Central District, the garage rock milieu, and the underground scene, illustrates the relationship between incubated milieux and the wider, translocal milieu; the music industry; and American society in general. Even insular milieux, while providing a specific function in their community, were still part of a larger picture. While each milieu had characteristics that were unique to that particular scene, there were other traits they all shared.

The music scene in the Central District reflected a number of factors that should be kept in mind when exploring the importance of a particular milieu in the broader music community. First, the scene interacted with, and was influenced by, various other milieux. These included the musicians from other regions of the country who toured through the Pacific Northwest, as well as the cultural variants that migrants brought with them when they arrived looking for work, or in escaping the overt racism of the South. Second, a local milieu is also affected by the location's unique history. In this case, the history of the black community in the region, from its beginnings, wartime experience, to the segregation its population faced in subsequent decades was imprinted on the scene. Third, the

milieu had inherent political implications for those that may have felt disenfranchised by traditional social, economic, and political institutions. Music becomes an outlet in which marginalized voices are articulated and from which grievances are expressed, sometimes reaching mainstream society.[1] The final point, however, shows that this type of agency does not last forever; a milieu cannot sustain itself as an avenue of opportunity indefinitely. The social capital of a music milieu rises and falls, depending on the types of interaction with other miliuex and the wider society. These interactions lead to change, and in the case of the Central District milieu, they led to black youths putting aside earlier traditions and moving towards new forms of agency.

The Central District milieu arose out of *de facto* segregation and the desire of blacks to have agency outside of the racist institutions in Seattle. Music was a way for members of the community to improve their social standing, if not their economic condition. It affected the youth of the Central District, providing conditions suitable for musicians with talent, such as Ray Charles, Quincy Jones, and Jimi Hendrix, to exploit. There were limits to these opportunities, however, as each had to leave the city to further his musical career. Furthermore, there were restrictions on the life of a milieu, and an ebb and flow occurred as each developed and then became stagnant. This would not be the only time musicians would deem it necessary to leave the Pacific Northwest for a chance at success.

[1] In a larger context, this idea can be expanded to a geographical region as a whole and not just the music scene. At first, the Central District community was affected by its particular location and population, and then with the influx of blacks from other regions of the country during certain periods, such as the Second World War, its development was influenced and altered by this interaction. The Central District was therefore also partly shaped by its relationship with the wider region.

This was due to the three factors that have been the common theme throughout the thesis: timing, marketability, and innovation.

With the decline of the Central District milieu came the ascension of the Pacific Northwest's white youth milieu. Through innovation, timing, and marketability, participants in this milieu were able to create another scene and have success on the local and national scale. By the 1960s, youths created a circuit in the Pacific Northwest, playing garage rock at teen dance parties. Like the members of the Central District milieu, however, many musicians eventually had to leave the region to pursue further success due to the ebb and flow of music milieux. This tied into changes that occurred in American consumer culture drawing from an escalating standardization of commodities, developments in communication such as radio, and a focus on youth culture. These changes happened just as the baby-boom generation was coming of age, and in its vast numbers this cohort was able to wield incredible cultural capital as it came to dictate the direction of American society through the 1960s and 70s.

Despite this shift, however, bands like The Kingsmen and Paul Revere and the Raiders still had to leave the region, and this trend continued into the 1980s. Many headed south for the perceived opportunities the Los Angeles music industry offered. Penelope Houston, for instance, would front the groundbreaking San Francisco band, The Avengers; and Michael "Duff" McKagan would be a founding member of Guns N' Roses. Those musicians that remained faced not only a decline in the music milieu, but the economy as well. With the standard of living declining and the lustre of the suburbs diminishing, Seattle and the

surrounding region felt like prison to many youths. Additionally, the traditional family dynamic had changed for many. Along with this, the political climate under Reagan as well as the music industry's focus on greed and escapism further alienated the members of Generation X.

Instead of attempting to participate inside mainstream cultural institutions, which were perceived as impenetrable by those on the margin, the outsiders set out to create a scene of their own by developing an alternative culture. A network of underground music scenes developed across the United States and it was influenced in part by the Pacific Northwest's milieu. This occurred through a combination of innovation, timing, and marketability, and challenged the status quo. For this to occur, members of the milieu had to create their own institutions such as record labels, venues, radio formats and fanzines. In doing so, the community's members were engaged with creating alternative methods of expression, agency, and opportunity outside the corporate, commodified, and consumable culture that had evolved through the last half of the 20th century.

"Teenage angst has paid off well/ Now I'm bored and old"[2]

Finally, with the success of bands like Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Soundgarden, and Pearl Jam, musicians no longer always had to leave Seattle and the Pacific Northwest to pursue opportunities. Once the milieu skyrocketed into popularity, a lot of the people that previously left rushed back to Seattle, and countless newcomers joined them. Even before the release of *Nevermind,* musicians like Cobain were critical of some in the milieu. Writing the song

[2] Nirvana, "Serve the Servants," Geffen, 1993.

"Lithium," Cobain decried the participant who "likes to sing along and/ he likes to shoot his gun."[3] Reminiscent of Mr. Epp and the Calculations' "Mohawk Man," Cobain was criticizing the values of some within the milieu, as well as ironically pointing out the antithetical nature of their participation; it was these people bands like Nirvana were reacting against. This problem worsened the more popular the bands became.

Eddie Vedder and the crowd at a free Pearl Jam concert, Seattle, 1992. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.soulcatcherstudio.com)

[3] Nirvana, "Lithium," DGC, 1991.

Suddenly, the mainstream's cultural focus was on the region, bringing the music, fashion, and attitude into the corporate fold. The media would join the frenzy and report on the latest fashions and buzzwords; the clothes of the Pacific Northwest thrift shop soon graced the display cases on Seventh Avenue in New York City. The move from the underground to the mainstream, with the media attention and popular acceptance, came with a loss of perceived meaning and authenticity, and the mainstream moved in to exploit the subculture's innovations. Participants handled the success of the milieu in different ways. For some, it was the beginning of careers in the upper echelons of the music industry; for others, it was the end of an era, where members of the community were no longer acting independently of mainstream influence or attention.

The milieu's bands, at the height of their popularity, contested the status quo within the mainstream, and attempted to retain their earlier values in the corporate arena. For instance, when Nirvana was on the cover of *the Rolling Stone*, Cobain wore a shirt saying "corporate magazines still suck."[4] He also wore a ballroom dress on MTV's normally testosterone-charged program *Headbanger's Ball,* altering ideas of constructed glamour and masculinity in America.[5] When MTV wanted Nirvana to play "Smells like Teen Spirit" at their 1992 music awards, and Nirvana wanted to play "Rape Me" instead, Nirvana backed out of the live performance. They ultimately agreed to perform at the show, apparently due to the fear of MTV blacklisting other bands working with Gold Mountain, Nirvana's management company. In a compromise, they agreed

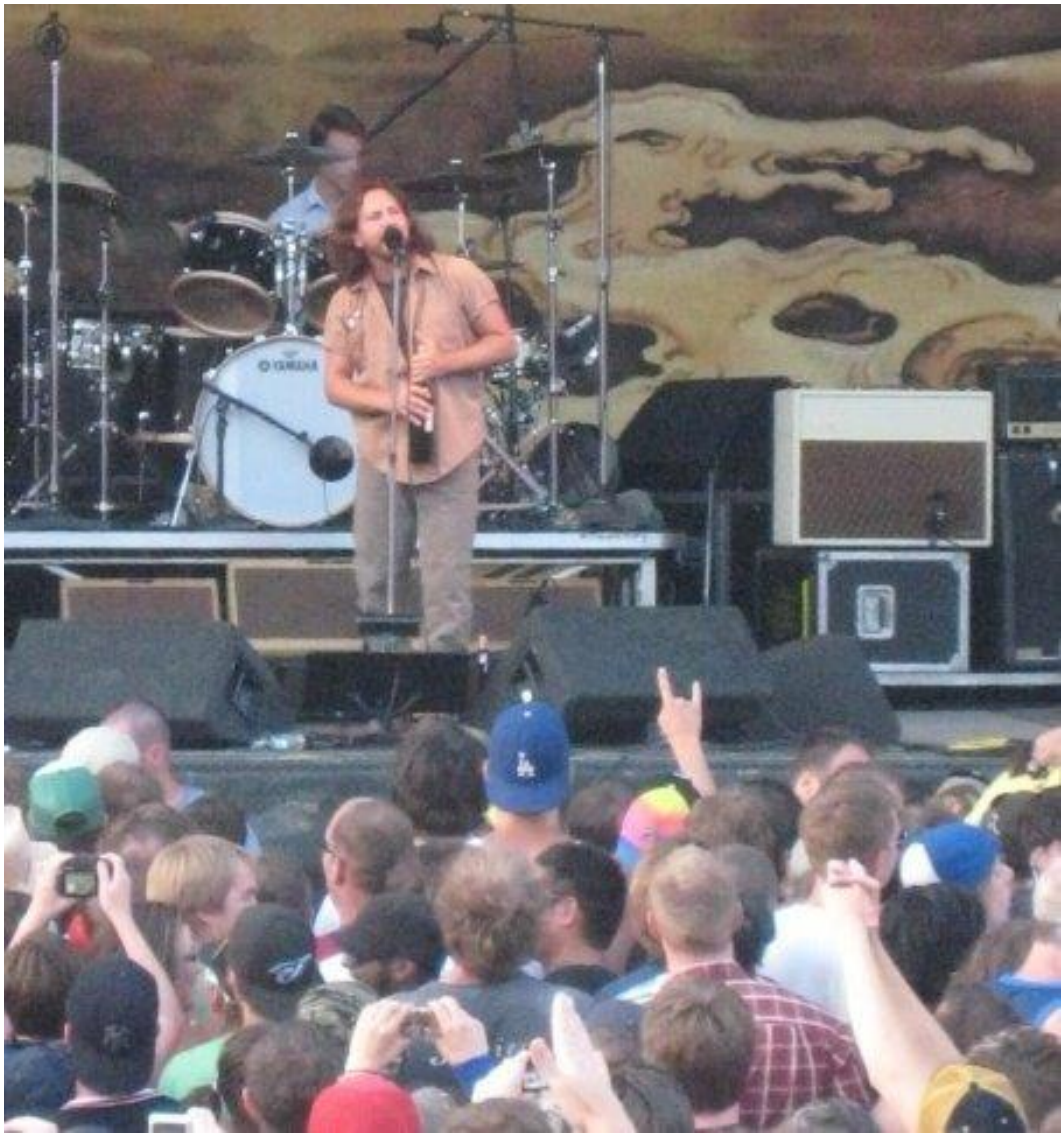
[4] Charles Cross, *Heavier Than Heaven: A Biography of Kurt Cobain* (New York: Hyperion, 2001), p. 237.
[5] Everett True, *Nirvana: The Biography.* (Cambridge MA, Da Capo Press, 2007), p. 311.

to play "Lithium" instead of "Rape Me" or "Smells like Teen Spirit." Despite this agreement, when they started their performance, Nirvana brazenly launched into the intro of "Rape Me," before continuing with "Lithium." They then finished the song with Novoselic hitting himself in the head with his bass, Cobain smashing his guitar into the amps and then falling into the drum kit, and Grohl going on a rampage on stage and then calling out Axl Rose (Rose had gotten into an argument with Cobain and his wife backstage before the show). This spectacle was broadcast live to the television audience.[6]

The members of Pearl Jam were also uneasy with their mainstream success, and intentionally tried to undermine it. Aside from releasing less commercially-friendly records, they stopped making music videos for every release and doing interviews with the media. Additionally, the band took its objections to the unjust practices of Ticketmaster to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., with Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard testifying during congressional hearings on 30 June 1994.[7] For the next few years, Pearl Jam attempted to tour the United States in nontraditional venues; but organizing DIY shows proved too difficult with challenges intensified by the band's mainstream popularity. More importantly, Pearl Jam championed activist causes and gave its royalties away to charity. In a move that likely silenced many critics that claimed the band had become too commercialized, when the song "Spin the Black Circle" won a Grammy award on 28 February 1996, Eddie Vedder went on stage to accept it and

[6] Charles Cross, *Heavier Than Heaven: A Biography of Kurt Cobain* (New York: Hyperion, 2001), p. 247-250. To view the performance, see: "Nirvana en los Mtv Music Awards 1992 – Lithium" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8y5ibUBw1k&feature=fvst [accessed 28 November 2011].
[7] Jonathan Cohen and Mark Wilkerson, *Pearl Jam: Twenty* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), pp. 147-148.

explained that he was up there because his father would have liked it, but aside from that he did not "think it means anything."[8]



Pearl Jam performing at the Virgin Music Festival, Calgary, 2009. (Source: Personal Collection)

Unquestionably, iconic status affected the bands within the Seattle milieu, as well as the community itself. While fame was perhaps not the only reason for Kurt Cobain's suicide, his reaction to celebrity certainly did not help. Following

[8] As quoted in Cohen and Wilkerson, Pearl Jam, p. 181. To view the speech, see: "Pearl Jam 1996 Grammy's Speech" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHEYs0CMe4U [accessed 28 November 2011].

his death and the end of Nirvana, Dave Grohl formed another band called the Foo Fighters, the popularity of which continues to grow as the band plays concerts in stadiums all over the world. Krist Novoselic also kept playing in other bands and remains active politically. Writing an online column for *Seattle Weekly,* he recently published an article on how he felt the time had come for the Occupy Movement "to engage electoral politics."[9] Furthermore, although no longer having the audience he once did, Novoselic still utilizes the milieu's connections; at the 21 September 2009 Pearl Jam concert in Seattle, Eddie Vedder spoke on his behalf to the crowd at Key Arena on an upcoming local election.

Not all bands from the community have disappeared; Pearl Jam, celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2011, recently toured through Canada with Mudhoney as its opening act. Additionally, Soundgarden has re-formed following a hiatus and is touring as well as writing new material. Interestingly, many of the bands active in the underground network previous to the success of the Seattle milieu found their own popularity growing afterwards. Now, bands like The Pixies tour the world and play to larger audiences then ever before. This is due to new audiences seeking out the predecessors of bands like Nirvana, as well as writers documenting the underground milieu. Indeed, participants in contemporary milieux gained credibility from knowing the history of earlier musicians. This has culminated in the "Taking Punk to the Masses" Exhibit at the Experience Music Project (EMP) Museum in Seattle, a centre dedicated to music

[9] Krist Novoselic, "How Occupy Wall Street can Occupy the Ballot Box," *Seattle Weekly: Blogs,* 16 November 2011, http://blogs.seattleweekly.com/reverb/2011/11/krist_novoselic_how_occupy_wal.php [accessed 16 November 2011].

originating in the city and the Pacific Northwest. The EMP has heightened the understanding of the region's musical tradition, and recently more recognition has been given to Seattle artists. For instance, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Jimi Hendrix's birth, a park will be opened in 2012 dedicated to the musician. Jimi Hendrix Park will cover over two and a half acres of the Central District, and include a space for performances.[10]

Landmark near 12th Avenue and Jackson Street. (Source: Personal Collection)

[10] Matthew Perputua, "Jimi Hendrix Park to Open Next Year." *Rolling Stone,* 5 December 2011, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/jimi-hendrix-park-to-open-next-year-20111205 [accessed 5 December 2011]. Seattle opening a park in remembrance of Hendrix may seen disingenuous considering the musician was essentially kicked out of the city, and was jeered by students at Garfield High School upon his return to the Central District. This revisionism places Hendrix within a narrative of inclusion in Seattle's memory is recent; however it is widespread. For instance, inside the Green Tortoise Hostel near Pike Market, there is a mural of Hendrix overlooking Seattle's downtown skyline.

Additionally, bands from the 1960s' garage rock milieu continue to perform throughout the United States, including Paul Revere and the Raiders, The Wailers, The Ventures, and The Sonics. For these musicians and their fans, the period of their youth is stressed, and bands like Paul Revere and the Raiders have sustained their revolutionary image, and carry on performing in American Minutemen uniforms. Interestingly, The Wailers recently posed for a photo in the lot that once held The Spanish Castle, showing that despite the impact of time on both the music community and its members, the original attitude remains.

Paul Revere and the Raiders, encore. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.mlive.com)

The Wailers, standing where The Spanish Castle once stood. (Source, *Google Images*, http://seattletimes.nwsource.com)

Eventually, as with all music milieux, after the rise came the inevitable fall; the popularity of the community could not be sustained forever. As the mainstream focus left Seattle, the music industry looked to other regions for the next milieu that could be commodified and its nuances translated into corporate profits. This forced exposure led to what could be termed "diet-punk," or "grunge-lite," where aspects of the underground's style were exploited, but the meaning behind it was lost. For example, the Seattle scene had inspired and

interacted with the Riot Grrrls, whose philosophy was in turn transformed into a hollow form of "girl power" by the Spice Girls. There were also groups that adopted some of the sonic characteristics of the Pacific Northwest bands, but lacked the attitude that had been integral to the milieu. The reaction against materialism and the objectification of women in rock 'n' roll were reversed; bands that sounded like Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains, Soundgarden, and Nirvana sang of opulent lifestyles and sexual conquests. Moreover, teenage angst became a marketable catch-phrase. Formulaic songs based on youth-driven themes, such as disaffection, boredom, and anger at authority were commodified and mass-produced. Many of these vapid caricatures continue to release music and perform in high-profile forms today.

The high level of attention placed on Seattle was finite. This did not mean, however, that the region stopped producing talented musicians. Nor did it require these artists to leave for places like Los Angeles as they were once forced to. There is still and ebb and flow cycle to the milieu, but the Pacific Northwest is still considered a viable place to find musical opportunities. K Records, for example, is still in operation, with the description: "K explodes the teenage underground into passionate revolt against the corporate ogre world-wide."[11] Sub Pop is still active as well, with Mudhoney remaining on the label, and Mark McLaughlin works for the company when not on tour. Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2008, Sub Pop bands like Green River re-formed to perform at a concert marking the company's two-decade existence. Now, the label also has new talents on its roster such as The Head and the Heart, The Fleet Foxes, Iron

[11]K Records, "Profile Bio," *Twitter*, http://twitter.com/#!/K_records [accessed 15 December 2011].

and Wine, and The Shins; these bands and others continue to set trends for the industry. What is different presently is that bands are inevitably compared to the earlier milieu as people wonder: "is this the next Nirvana?" This is a dangerous question to ask, for it is not simply suggesting the band will have a melodic and heavily-distorted force to its sound, it is drawing parallels to a group that is remembered for changing the attitude of the American mainstream. There will be another shift in American popular culture, but will a new music milieu be comparable to the early 1990s when the entire world heard the scream of youth in the Pacific Northwest?

Pearl Jam onstage. (Source: *Google Images*, http://www.989thedrive.com)

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Operation Phoenix Records: http://www.operationphoenixrecords.com
Pacific Northwest Bands: http://pnwbands.com
Seattle Municipal Government: http://www.seattle.gov
Twitter: http://twitter.com
Youtube: http://www.youtube.com

Appendix A:
Sub Pop column in *The Rocket*

S>U>B/P>O>P

West Coast Secedes From Nation

What the hell, let's talk about West Coast independents. Listed below are five pick hits for August '83, plus an interview with Joe Carducci. Joe originally worked with Systematic Record Distributors in Berkeley and now helps manage L.A. ''hardcore'' band Black Flag. He's also part of the brain-trust at SST Records, one of the strongest independent rock labels on the West Coast.

Black Flag: Beyond the Mohawk

GLEN E. FRIEDMAN

How did the Black Flag/Minutemen European tour go?
Joe: The audiences, in general, are really conservative over there. A lot more leather jackets. People were yelling at Black Flag, calling 'em hippies. . . . They played two shows in London, eight in Germany; they played in Austria, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam. . . . It seems like everyone watches what their friends do and if their friends are not into it then neither are they; it inhibits the whole audience response.

That almost sounds like L.A.
I don't think so anymore. L.A.'s really fragmented at this point. There's a lot of different little scenes, and when Black Flag plays, there aren't a lot of people who are identifiably new wave or punk.

So Joe, is psychedelia the new big thing in L.A.?
Bands get tied together and they get marketed. Places like Wong's or the Roxy won't book the Minutemen or the Circle Jerks but they will book things like the Rain Parade. It's irritating because they're just retreads in most cases. The Dream Syndicate has gotten somewhere and so they've fostered other bands. There's a real safe little scene developing. Green on Red is real good, but they date back a long time, they're a real thing. I don't know that those other bands are real at all.

What are some future projects for SST records?
New Meat Puppets album (Phoenix), Minutemen 12''. Husker Du 12'' (Minneapolis), and an album by the Stains. Saccharine Trust is about to start recording. There's also an Overkill album and a St. Vitus album.

Overkill is kind of a metal/hardcore crossover?
Yeah. A lot of it is very fast so they're more into the Motorhead thing. Most of the St. Vitus stuff is slower, more along the lines of early Black Sabbath. Real heavy metal. Real heavy.

What do you think of the San Francisco scene compared to L.A.?
It's more nebulous down here in L.A. and not as political. It's just as small minded I guess but San Francisco, of course, is really colored by the politics of **Maximum Rock 'N' Roll** (fanzine/radio show). There's talk of boycotting the **Eastern Front** (hardcore-punk, etc. festival) because it's being booked by SST.

Why is there this animosity towards SST?
Well, people were phoning in to **Maximum Rock 'N' Roll** and complaining that we were ignoring San Francisco talent, which goes back to what I was saying, **there isn't any**. . . . If people are in a band they're not really playing music, they're just being ''in the scene'' . . . I think Angst is the best band in San Francisco right now.

Does anybody ever talk about the Northwest down there?
People talk about bands that they know, like D.O.A. and the Fartz, the Wipers. The Fartz are thought of highly in the Frisco scene because of the anarchy thing.

Do any of the kids in L.A. listen to funk or black music?
That's more in line with the arty Hollywood scene. There's people in L.A. trying to do the New York thing. . . . There was a funk club, one of the members of the Screamers was a DJ. They had a lot of problems with it because it started out as all white Hollywood people and then black people came. I don't know what New York's like, but Los Angeles is a real segregated city.

Black Flag will be in Seattle at the Eagles Nest, 710 Union, on Sunday, Aug. 7 at 8 p.m. Appearing with them will be the mighty Meat Puppets from Phoenix, and locals Ellis Dee (a.k.a. 10 Minute Warning). SST Records can be contacted at P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260.

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LOS ANGELES

THE FLESHEATERS: A Hard Road to Follow, LP. (Upsetter Records, Box 48 1144, L.A., CA 90048) Rarely does a vocalist creep under your skin like Chris D. Yecchh. He's got character I guess, straining for the right note, then smothering it, the microphone halfway down his throat. But wait, **A Hard Road to Follow**, the Fleshеaters' 4th LP, reaffirms that Chris D. is the most evocative rock lyricist on the West Coast, possibly the U.S.A. Romance and pain, a creepy world. Rusty nails, tattered dresses and beds of cold concrete. Wow. Read it.

SAN FRANCISCO

PELL MELL: The Bumper Crop, 5-song 12'' (Sixth Street International, c/o Rough Trade, 326 Sixth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103) Round hole, square peg. Instrumentalists Pell Mell remain the most original band on the West Coast. Yes folks, that's right — trying to package these guys as the latest blah-blah whatever is fucking impossible. The minimal, hypno-surf sound of their first record is over with. Now it's bass, drums and guitar plus new addition, Steve Fisk on synthesizer. It's a busier sound; rich, ornate and rational as hell. Like **Duane Eddy** and **A Certain Ratio**, whom they've cited as influences, Pell Mell is in love with tone and atmosphere; modern mood music. Good for at least 50 listens!

SACRAMENTO

REBEL TRUTH: 9-song 7'' (Version Sound Independent Communications, P.O. Box 429, Yellow Springs, OH 45387, $2.00) Hardcore/thrash. Some bands want to drink beer and show off their new mohawk, others, like Rebel Truth, are more concerned with protest and social change. Rebel Truth - dedicated to RISE ABOVE. They attack war and middle class values, not with cheap slogans, but with incisive criticism and intelligence. They are strict vegetarians and are committed to ''honor, honesty and compassion.'' This band plays very tight thrash with effective chant/chorus counterpart. Their music is physical, sincere, and, just possibly, more important than a new skateboard or a studded wrist band.

PORTLAND

WIPERS: Over The Edge LP. (Trap Records, Box 42465, Portland, OR 97242) This record is great. This record makes me cry: The Wipers are God. There is so much beauty, so much soul and so much power in this recording that I cannot recommend it enough. No quirky trends or gimmicks here — just three people who believe in what they're doing. No, it's not scratch-dub-hardcore, it's TOTAL CLASSIC ROCK. Frustration, loneliness, alienation, rebellion. Conviction. A few psychedelic flourishes held over from their last LP, **Youth of America**; subtle use of feedback, tremolo bar. Greg Sage's guitar playing, like his voice, is stylish, powerful yet understated. A simple glance across the room and the house caves in. The Wipers are the best Northwest rock band since the Sonics and ''Over the Edge'' is a total American classic.

VANCOUVER

CULTURE SHOCK: Forever and Ever/Thought You Were a Friend, 45 (c/o Brian Maitland, 4204 Boxer St., Burnaby, B.C. V5J 2V9 Canada. $2.00.) Unassuming yet ''utterly charming'' garage-pop 45. Warm, sincere, CATCHY. They dig the Buzzcocks and it shows. It's a drag that 45s like this one are going out of style, they're so fun, and who needs LP filler anyway? ''Thought You Were a Friend'' is pure pop.

By Bruce Pavitt

(Source: *Google Images*, www.subpop.com/history)

Appendix B:
First Edition of *YEAH*!

EDITOR
Wendi A. K. Dunlap

ADVERTISING SALES
Tamara Allen
Katherine Carbon
Danimal
Dave Guinn

BUSINESS MANAGER
Martin Sellars

ART DIRECTOR
Scott Neilson

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Rob Morgan
Kirk VanWormer

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Tamara Allen
Dash Danger
Steve Hadley
G. Larue
Nicholas A. Markleby
Nate Johnson

DISTRIBUTION
Dave Guinn
Jimm McIver

TITLE CONSULTANT
Dave Guinn

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What's up?

Hi, and welcome to the debut issue of *YEAH!*, a new weekly live music newspaper. What can you expect to see in *YEAH!*? Well, we'll tell ya! Each issue will feature several reviews of recent live shows in the Seattle area; and starting with issue 2, we'll be running a regular series of interviews with local bands. This week we have a very unusual look at **The Squirrels**, the first episode of our soon-to-be-classic series *A Date with Dash*, and a review of up-and-comers **Skin-n-Bones**. *Pop Lust* legend **Rob Morgan**'s *Two Katz and a Toaster* comic strip will tickle your wacky bone (this time it's on page 4).

Our focus is, and always will be, on local live music. We see ourselves not as competition for *The Rocket*, but as more of a weekly supplement; *The Rocket*'s focus is more broad, while we try to zero in on a more specialized topic. We hope that you'll make a habit of picking up *YEAH!* weekly; meanwhile, write and tell us what you think!

Squirrels dish up veggies

(Local legends ***The Squirrels*** *recently became the first local band to feature a combination vegetable/saxophone player. Our intrepid Yeah! reporter , Nicholas Alexander Markleby, was on the scene at a recent Squirrels gig to tell us all about it.)*

Picture this: two potatoes clanking together. Clanking, endlessly, rhythmically clanking. Now let your eyes wander back into your head. You see yourself, you see your beer, your see your hand beside the beer, fingernails maybe a little too short. You tell yourself you won't chew them anymore, but you know you will. You wonder, "What am I doing here? Why do I sit here and listen to this? Why do I take this? Why, on this night, have I elected to see this particular band? Why?"

On stage, Tom Vail picks up a husk of corn and begins to play it coolly and efficiently, like a guirro, his potato peeler rhythmically wreaking havoc on the innocent piece of corn. Juice spews onto his hands, but he seems oblivious: wrapped in the music, intent on keeping the beat. Suddenly you realize, maybe remember, why you are here.

Tom Vail, out of vegetables at the Owl Café.

"He's new, isn't he?" you ask someone across the table. They answer that he is. You ask where they found him. Your friend says that Vail was found destitute, no friends or relatives, only a used BMW and a pretty decent job at Abercrombie and Fitch. "I guess the guys realized that he had something special," your friend speculates before taking another sip of his beer.

Just then you see the young comedic prodigy pick up a hula hoop. Spinning and swiveling, he sets a tenor saxophone to his lips and begins to play. The crowd goes wild. You go to the bathroom.

(Editor's note—We swear this article is true: every word of it! If you don't believe us, check out the Squirrels this Friday at Scoundrel's Lair opening for the Dead Milkmen, or Saturday at the Popllama Picnic.)

(Well, O.K.—maybe every word isn't quite true—I know potatoes don't clank!)

A Date with Dash

by Dash Danger

Oh, what a night, what an incredible night! Do you ever have nights like that—just too much fun? Nah, you probably don't, so let me tell you a story about my town and you can just pretend you were there too.

Just before nine, the DashMobile pulls up in front of Untouchable Records and we pick up my date,

WHO'S doing WHAT?

or since we're pretending you're there too, *our* date, the lovely, charming, and very talented Marie Chauvan. You'll like her; Marie's always a fun date!

So we cruise down to Scoundrel's Lair, and here we are: the **Power Mowers** are about to go on. If you've never seen these guys, hey, your excuse ain't gonna work on me! This is Blackie, and that's Christy—you remember her, right? Well, he sings, and so does she (yeah, they're a lot like Sonny and Cher). The driving force back there hammering tattoos into the skins is little Richard Steverud, ex-Fastback (but don't ask him about that). Hey, who's that guy, and where's Brent? Oh, Brent's off to be a full-time Winning Wolf, so this guy, Jerry, is the new guitarist.

They're starting, grab yourself a drink, we gotta dance! Whoa, aren't these guys great? Where's my drink? Didn't you get me one too? Ah, forget it—look, the Mowers are doing their big hit off the PopLlama *Combo Deluxe* album, so they put a mic down on the floor for Kurt Anderson of the Broadcasters to lead the audience in the whistle-along chorus. Gotta go, gotta dance; aren't these guys just totally awesome? That was the last song, but don't worry, they'll be back—just repeat after me: "MORE, MORE, MORE, MORE!"

See, nothing to it! Look, Christy's putting the mic back down on the floor so Kurt can sing along to "This Old House." Geez, what a sweating mess I am; you got anything I could wear? A shirt? Ah, forget it—we gotta run.

Here we are at Squid Row to see **The Life**. They're already playing; the dance floor's almost as big as two table tops, but that's O.K. We've come to jump up and down like wacky, and so we do, while the band reels off its hits "In A Storm," "Don't Fix It," "If I Had You," "Alone," and "Another Side of Life." They are hot tonight. I've heard all the comparisons people make about the Life: they sound like the Doors, U2, the Doors, Iggy, the Doors, Van Morrison, the Doors, Sim-

(continued on p. 5)

Skin-n-Bones: energy, motion, and more

Joe Foucault, bassist and vocalist for **Skin-n-Bones**, describes his band's all-original music as "energetic and movin', and I really dig that." After seeing them at the West Seattle Street Festival on July 18, I have to agree. The three-piece band captured the audience and kept us "movin'!"

Joe Foucault knew he grew his hair long for a reason!

Foucault and drummer/vocalist Paul Delker have been jamming together about four or five years, and guitarist Mike McCool joined about one and one-half years ago. The band's name comes from the members' appearance; the three young men (the oldest is 21) must each weigh about 100 pounds and be about 5'10" to 6' tall.

Their songs range from tunes about "horrible relationships" to political topics—Joe likes singing detrimental things about the government. "It's easier to yell and let frustrations out," he says.

Joe has seven years of experience playing classical stand-up bass, and moved on to electric because it provided him with the opportunity to improvise more. The threesome all write songs together, each bringing his own part.

I have a mental image of these guys about three years ago, in high school, goofing around in a basement, writing songs and playing. Now they're out, and they sound really tight; they will probably improve a lot, as well.

(For a copy of Skin-n-Bones' four-track demo, write to Joe Foucault at 1400 Boren #317, Seattle, WA 98101.)

• **Steve Hadley**

WHO? WHERE?

Clubs and bands must submit listings of upcoming gigs by Friday at 5 p.m. for publication in the following Tuesday's issue of *YEAH!* Please mail listings to us at P.O. Box 85256, Seattle, WA 98145-1256.

A checkmark (√) indicates an **all-ages** show.

TUESDAY

Andy Summers If you had to watch him from the back of the Tacoma Dome on the last Police tour, now's your chance to catch him in a more intimate setting. Parker's, 17001 Aurora Ave. N.

WEDNESDAY

Savoy Brown at The Ballard Firehouse, N.W. Market and Russell.
The **No Means No**, **Feast**, and **Death & Taxes** show scheduled for the Central Tavern tonight has been ***cancelled.***
Shreds at the Far Side Tavern, 10815 Roosevelt Way N.E.
Razorbacks at Meeker's Landing, 1401 W. Meeker St. in Kent.
Hugh's Blues at the Old Timer's Café, 620 1st Ave.

THURSDAY

Isaac Scott at the Scarlet Tree, 6521 Roosevelt Way N.E.
Shreds at the Far Side.
Razorbacks at the Owl Cafe, 5140 Ballard Ave. N.W.
Rangehoods at Meeker's Landing.
Mighty Diamonds and **Defenders** 9 p.m. at Parker's.
Hugh's Blues at the Old Timer's Café.

FRIDAY

Jr. Cadillac Still rockin' after all these years. Tonight at the Central Tavern, 207 1st Ave.
Hugh's Blues at the Old Timer's Café.
Isaac Scott at the Scarlet Tree.
The Ducks at the Ballard Firehouse.
Dead Milkmen and the **Squirrels** at Scoundrel's Lair, 3244 Eastlake Ave. E.
Razorbacks at the Owl Café.
Rangehoods at Meeker's Landing.
√ **Ebenezer Obey** and **Je Ka Jo** African pop at the Moore Theater, 1932 2nd Ave.

SATURDAY

Variant Cause Bring orange traffic cones and sing along to "I Live By The Freeway." Tonight at the Central.
Hugh's Blues at the Old Timer's Café.
Isaac Scott at the Scarlet Tree.
√ **Popllama Picnic**, featuring **Prudence Dredge**, the **Acoustinauts**, **Different Ones**, the **Fastbacks**, **Power Mowers**, **Red Dress**, the **Squirrels**, **Jimmy Silva**, and **special guests** at Lake Murphy Park in Marysville. Call 328-5225 for more information.
The Ducks at the Ballard Firehouse.
Razorbacks at the Owl Café.
Rangehoods at Meeker's Landing.
√ **Four Tops** It's the same old song, but it still sounds great. The Paramount Theater.
Slamhound Hunters at the Backstage, 2208 N.W. Market.
The **Lords of the New Church** show scheduled for tonight at the Central has been ***cancelled.***

SUNDAY

√ **Jr. Cadillac** at the Renton River Days, Liberty Park, 5:30 p.m.
√ **Suzanne Vega** Sensitive types don't miss this one. 8 p.m. at the Moore.
√ **Applied Science, Today of all Days** and **World Beat Band** at Gas Works Park, 2 p.m. A benefit for local food banks.
√ **Big Black** at the Georgetown Steamplant. The swan song for this Chicago threesome, whose recent Showbox set is fondly remembered by many.

MONDAY

√ **Young Fresh Fellows** and **Nation of Milk** Free and **all-ages**, 6 p.m. at the Mural Amphitheater, Seattle Center. Be there; we will, up in the front dancing like fools.

—Dash's Date

ple Minds, the Doors, and so on, but frankly I just don't see it. Jimm has little competition as a vocalist, and Tony, Eric and Casey could knock instant pudding outta U2, or at least Simple Minds, so *there*. Whoops, gotta go—we're on a tight schedule.

Now we're at the Canterbury, home for the night of **Prudence Dredge**. I can see that playing you their album, *Big Ellen*, on the drive over here could in no way prepare you for this—what's going on, anyway? Everyone's switched instruments! Kurt Bloch, of the Fastbacks/Runaway Trains/Different Ones, is singing "Monster Mash" with Dredge drummer Dave Guinn. The crowd is going nuts; now they're chanting "We want the Trains!" So Marie Chauvan takes the stage with fellow Runaway Trains Phil Dirt on bass and Bloch on guitar, and the sole remaining Dredge member Quinn the Eskimo, I mean, Dave Guinn, on drums really banging away.

After rousing renditions of "Malaria Baby" and "Not Your Girlfriend," Joey throws everybody off the stage, and Prudence Dredge plays a few more tunes; Lou Reed's "Rock 'n'Roll" turns into "Hey Jude," and everybody switches instruments again: Mark's playing sax, Mick's playing guitar, Tom's playing trombone, Carl's pounding those keyboards—look fast—now Mick's on drums and Tom's on bass—whew!

Marie and I had originally planned to head down the frat rock city, the Attic in Madison Park, to see the **Young Fresh Fellows**, but this is just way too much fun and I just can't pull myself away. What a show, what a night, totally awesome; but hey, you've been a great date, let's do this again next week. Ciao, baby—but wait! You too can have "A Date with Dash." Write me here, c/o *Yeah!*, P.O. Box 85256, Seattle, WA 98145-1256.

(Source: *YEAH!* Seattle: 4 August, 1987)

Appendix C:
Seattle Scene Report in *Maximum Rocknroll*

Scene reports

Ron/ PO Box 20224/ Seattle, WA 98102

SEATTLE

It's time again for the ever popular Seattle scene report, so just sit back as I weave a tale of the Northwest.

The Bands: The biggest news that I can think of would have to be Blaine Fart has left the ACCUSED; Tommy and Alex plan to continue as a band with a few vocalists and possibly a 2nd guitarist and possibly a new drummer. They just released an ACCUSED/ MORPHIOUS split 7" on Empty Records from here in Seattle, and they plan on releasing a new LP, Hymns Of The Deranged, on some unknown label. I guess Blaine left the band to get more involved in school.

Some other big news (to me at least) is that I've left BROTHERHOOD; Vic plans to get a new singer and go on with the band. I believe the Black Label record deal has been called off. A little good news, though, is that the repress of the No Tolerance EP is out and those of you who ordered one should finally have it. BROTHERHOOD's new address is 1529 NE 150th #1/ Seattle, WA 98155.

The DERELICTS are back from vacation and playing all over town. They'll be having a 12" EP coming out soon entitled The Derelicts Love Machine. It should have 9 songs or thereabouts. They're also putting out another 3- or 4- song single, I don't know on what label yet. The DERELICTS are a really rockin' band who "Are not a political band; (they) believe in thinking for yourself and not giving a fuck about what other people think." Assholes Unite. The new address for the DERELICTS is 1823 Nagle Pl. #G/ Seattle, WA 98102.

The MODEL CITIZENS are probably breaking up. There should be at least two new bands forming out of that. JESTERS OF CHAOS have a new EP coming out on their label Blue Bird Records, so look for that. SEDITIONARIES are a new band who've so far played out in Bremerton once. COGNITION possibly have ex-BROTHERHOOD member(s), and should be rocking it out pretty soon. Musically it's comparable to the newer hardcore sound

HATEFUL YOUTH have risen from the dead and have re-released the demo that they recorded back in '87. Pre-Straight Edge Speedcore. FITZ OF DEPRESSION are back out playing shows again. OverKill Records is going full on. The first release was Boston's Intent To Injure, up next is the REFUSE 7". The plans for a live Seattle Band comp. have been momentarily scrapped. The OKR address is PO Box 20224/ Seattle, WA 98102.

Also the zine Straight Up that I mentioned last time has had a name change; it's now called Open Hand and issue #2 has more Seattle news plus interviews with LAST GASP and REFUSE. It's available for 75¢ ppd to PO Box 20224/ Seattle, WA 98102.

Okay, somebody asked me why I never include Sub Pop bands in the scene report. Well it's very simple. When Sub Pop does something for the Seattle hardcore/punk scene besides saying that it's dead and that they've outgrown it, when they contribute something to this scene besides rock star attitudes, then I would be more than willing to write pages and pages of Sub Pop news. Until then, fuck it.

All-ages shows are still happening in Seattle, so please get ahold of us to set up a show. The numbers for Washington shows are: Seattle - Ron (206)325-4417; Spokane - Dave (509)624-ARTS; Tri-Cities - Mike (509)945-5990; Bellingham - Bill (206)733-2434; and Ellensburg - Carrie (509)925-1912.

Around the state: Spokane's BETTER OFF recorded for a 7" back in September and it will be released on Just For Fun Records from Longview, WA. The address for that label is JFF Records/ PO Box 2352/ Seattle, Wa. 92632. This label has also put out a 7" by GENERAL CONCERN. BETTER OFF have also gotten a new guitarist. TAKE CHARGE have been playing real often on the west side of the state (Seattle area), they really rock in what I would describe a harder Dag Nasty style. Hopefully they'll have something out soon. Bellingham's FIRST STEP have broken up but the 7" should be out soon. Two new bands have formed out of the FS break-up, but I don't know the names yet.

Well, shit, that's about all the scene that I can think of now — more next time. Don't send BROTHERHOOD stuff to my address anymore. Thanks,

BAD CHECK BOUNCERS

FEEDING THE CAUSE

DRUG FREE YOUTH!

LAST GASP

ADD 000

(Source: *Maximum Rocknroll*, No. 79 Berkeley: December 1989)

Appendix D:
Thesis Playlist

The following playlist consists either of songs by musicians discussed in this thesis, or recordings which give a deeper context to the chapter they are listed in. Everything included, at the time of writing, can be found at www.youtube.com .

Chapter One:

Scott Joplin “Maple Leaf Rag”
Grace Holden “All I Need”
Alan Freed "Radio Aircheck - WJW Cleveland 1954"
Louis Armstrong “When the Saints Go Marching In”
Freddie Keppard “Here Comes the Hot Tamale Man”
Jelly Roll Morton “Fat Meat and Greens”
Duke Ellington “It Don’t Mean a Thing”
Woody Guthrie “All You Fascists Bound to Lose”
Little Bill and the Bluenotes “Hallelujah I Love Her So”
Ray Charles “Rockin’ Chair Blues”
Quincy Jones “Evening in Paris”
Little Richard and the Upsetters “Every Night About this Time”
Sam Cooke “A Change is Gonna Come”
James Brown “Out of Sight (live in Olympia 1966)”
The Temptations “Get Ready”
Jimi Hendrix “Hey Joe”
Jimi Hendrix “Voodoo Child (Slight Return)”
Marvin Gaye “What’s Going On”
Robert Cray “Smoking Gun”
Ray Charles “Hit the Road Jack”

Chapter Two:

The Benny Goodman Orchestra “Sing, Sing, Sing (With a Swing)”
Richard Berry “Louie Louie”
The Sonics “Louie Louie”
Paul Revere and the Raiders “Louie Louie”
The Kingsmen “Louie Louie”
Elvis Presley “That’s All Right”
Little Willie John “Fever”
The Fleetwoods “Come Softly to Me”
Little Bill and the Bluenotes “I Love an Angel”
The Frantics “Werewolf”
The Wailers “Tall Cool One”
The Ventures “Walk Don’t Run”
Franklin D. Roosevelt “On the Bank Crisis - Sunday 13 March 1933”
Jimi Hendrix “Spanish Castle Magic”

The Wailers “Rosalie”
Paul Revere and the Raiders “Beatnik Sticks”
The Sonics “The Witch”
The Sonics “The Hustler”
The Sonics “Strychnine”
The Telepaths “Black”
The Dead Kennedys “California Über Alles"
Black Flag “Six Pack”
D.O.A. “World War 3”
The Fartz "Because This Fucking World Stinks"
The Germs “What We Do is Secret”
Guns N’ Roses “Welcome to the Jungle”

Chapter Three:

Mother Love Bone “Crown of Thorns”
Jane’s Addiction “Had a Dad”
Soundgarden “He Didn’t (Live from Seattle Bumbershoot Festival 1988)”
Mudhoney “Touch Me I’m Sick”
Ronald Reagan “Morning in America”
Fugazi “Waiting Room”
Hüsker Dü “Eight Miles High”
The Replacements “Unsatisfied”
Scream “Came Without Warning”
Martha Quinn “MTV VJ 1982”
Mötley Crüe “Girls, Girls, Girls”
The Dead Kennedys “Pull My Strings”
Mr. Epp and the Calculations “Of Course I’m Happy, Why?”
Rodney Bingenheimer “Rodney on the ROQ Theme”
Wipers “Doom Town”
Beat Happening “Black Candy (live on TCTV 1998)”
The U-Men “They”
The Melvins “Happy Grey or Black”
The Fastbacks “Swallow My Pride”
The Gits “Insecurities”
Skin Yard “Skins in My Closet”
Green River “This Town”
Malfunkshun "With Yo' Heart (Not Yo' Hands)"
The Posies “Grant Hart”
The Young Fresh Fellows "Amy Grant"
The Green Pajamas “Kim the Waitress”
Screaming Trees "You Tell Me All These Things"
Nirvana “Spank Thru (1/23/88)”
Tad "Loser"
Sonic Youth “Kill Yr. Idols”
Sonic Youth “Teenage Riot”

Alice in Chains “We Die Young”
Pearl Jam “Why Go”
7 Year Bitch “M.I.A.”
Bikini Kill “Double Dare Ya”
Nirvana “Smells Like Teen Spirit”