



CHAPTER 1

GRUNGE

WHAT I LIKE TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE SEATTLE SCENE IS HOW FUN AND GOOFY it could be: a lot of drinking, a lot of weed-smoking, a lot of very strong coffee – the crucial ingredients of rock & roll. And, of course, youth. We were all in our twenties, so it happened when it should have. One of the reasons the scene stood out is because it all sounded so different. Soundgarden always got tagged as the metal band; Mudhoney was the true grunge band; Nirvana was the pop-genius band; the Melvins were ground zero. After *Nevermind* came out, everything changed – and if the whole scene is going to be defined by that one record, that's cool, because the music stands up. There was a lot of mutual inspiration going on – when all the bands around us blew up, it definitely pushed Soundgarden to step up our game. We all came from the Eighties underground, and ended up on major labels and on MTV, spending all this money on video bullshit. But we used our time in the spotlight well, and it all started out with the best intentions, and out of total poverty – we weren't like these bands now in \$400 jeans. We didn't have monetary goals, really. We just wanted to dig in our heels and rock the fuck out.

BY **MATT CAMERON**, SOUNDGARDEN & PEARL JAM

Kurt Cobain
onstage in
Vancouver,
March 1991



CHAPTER 5

SUPERSTARS

THE ONLY GOOD THING ABOUT MTV IN THE NINETIES WAS THAT IT became a little bit of everything – hip-hop, metal, soul, folk, pop and grunge, all mixed together. I remember talking with one of the guys from U2 about how the last thing I expected to be the next big thing was long-haired guys playing punk metal – I would have expected either something we never heard of or some insane techno-dance hybrid. The music coming out of the Northwest was powerful and exciting, but the influences were so different than ours, and we had to keep doing what made sense for us. In the face of all that, something went right for R.E.M. at that time. I have no idea what it was. If I did, I'd go right back in and do it again. After spending all of the Eighties on the road, we weren't doing anything except making records and a couple videos – but for four or five years, we were just everywhere. I have memories of sitting in weird bars in Arizona and drinking whiskey and seeing us on TV. U2 also made their best record around that time: I remember having a cassette of *Achtung Baby* and thinking, 'Oh, man, that's good. We've got to do better work.'

BY **PETER BUCK, R.E.M.**

CHAPTER 10

POP

GENRES COME AROUND EVERY TEN YEARS, AND BY the late Nineties, when 'N Sync, the Backstreet Boys, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera were getting started, there was a whole new generation of kids who weren't old enough to have been into the New Kids, Tiffany and Debbie Gibson. I was a big fan of the New Kids – I remember going to see them in a stadium in Jackson, Mississippi, and the first time I remember thinking 'N Sync could be that big was when we did a sold-out showcase in Orlando just three weeks after we started. If there was a club full of screaming teenagers after three weeks, how big could it get? Right when we released our debut, **NSYNC*, MTV's *TRL* was in its first year – and *TRL* and the pop bands just fed each other. If you got on *TRL*, you were going to be a huge star – and we were on *TRL* a lot.

BY LANCE BASS, 'N SYNC



'N Sync in California, August 1999