

A

n article published in the last issue of the *X.Press* questioned the validity of a movement that has come to symbolize a certain subculture within our generation. The article, titled "Is Grunge Dead?", was a somewhat intelligible discussion of whether or not the current counterculture with noticeable connections to the so-called grunge scene can prevail after succumbing to commercialization and corporate control, and moreover, upon gaining mass attention beyond the realm of the industry appointed birthplace of grunge, Seattle.

It is not likely one is going to see the disappearance of a music-based phenomena overnight. Eventually grunge will move over for another scene, but that does not mean its societal impact will be forgotten. It is highly unlikely stories surrounding Kurt Cobain of Nirvana and his enchanting wife Courtney Love of Hole will suddenly dissipate from the plethora of entertainment magazines to be found. These people thrive on attention, and it is because of entertainers such as Cobain and Love that the once underground grunge scene assaulted the masses seemingly without warning.

Cobain, if you recall wore a t-shirt on the cover of *Rolling Stone* making the statement "corporate magazines still suck". The message he wore was slightly antithetical to the message he delivers. It is very questionable as to whether or not Nirvana could have made it independently. The band has, within the context of popular culture, become the exemplification of the Seattle scene although their style tends to be far too top forty for some. If Cobain doesn't like corporate rock, then he should remove himself from the cover of a very "middle-of-the-road" magazine read more by fortysomethings than by the children of those readers he is trying to appeal to. He could not reject the corporate rock scene for the simple fact that he realizes there is a chance he could no longer make it in the delirium of a music industry and with an audience which is looking for something innovative and captivating with each new day. This is not necessarily how it should be, but that's the way it is and Cobain dove into it head first. Cobain, in a sense, sold out.

It is rather bothersome, though, that companies such as Sony and MCA are constantly looking for the next big thing. As the article said, new bands are either overlooked or are simply thrown into a very volatile market without being prepared for the inevitability of not being successful. Not everyone is destined to be Pearl Jam. It is also annoying that certain grassroots members of the grunge movement have uttered remarks of anger over the fact that what began as a joke or pastime to them became a massive success in the eyes of many. The only problem with success is overexposure rather than popularity, and with the likes of *Vogue* demonstrating how to look Seattle bound in a \$1200 unkempt ensemble from Perry Ellis it can become a tad tiring to say the least.

I don't think one has to live in fear at the thought of the obscenely affluent strutting around in thrift shop daily wear, just as one should not consume their time worrying about the commercialization of an alternative scene commonly known as grunge. If counterculture activity did not receive attention from large corporations, countercultures would often times go unnoticed thus usurping the term counterculture. A group has to be relatively visible within society to be labelled. The counterculture occurrences of the 1960's were really no different from much of the activity taking place now. Our music is used to make a profit under the guise of Lollapalooza just as theirs was hidden beneath three days of music, love, and peace called Woodstock in 1969. Do not be misled to think these things just happen because the cultural climate is right. They happen because they are sound economic ventures for those in charge - the establishment. The irony is so stinging!

The next time you are listening to one of the extremely diverse bands that the popular media has forced into this single genre, do not be concerned that it won't be cool to do so tomorrow or that your thrift shop finds are going to lose a place in your wardrobe. Grunge is not all image. It is just the collective label for great music and all that surrounds it. It is far beyond the pages of *Vogue* and sometimes beneath the pages of *Rolling Stone*. Now, turn up your Sloan CD really loud and enjoy that Seattle - I mean Halifax - sound. ●



# Trials & Tribulations of a twentysomething