Album Review

Nirvana: Nevermind

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Nirvana

This American grunge/alternative rock band lead by Kurt Cobain surely doesn't need a long introduction. Formed in Aberdeen, Washington in 1987 by two high school students - Kurt Cobain and Krist Novoselic, Nirvana quickly developed from couple of friends to history-changing band. Although the other members of the band changed, the formation in the picture above: Krist Novoselic (bass guitar), Kurt Cobain (vocals, guitar) and Dave Grohl (drums) is its most famous and successful version.

Despite releasing only three full-length studio albums during their seven-year career, the band achieved a great success. Known for its hits like "Smells Like Teen Spirit", "Lithium" or "Come As You Are", Nirvana will always be regarded as one of the most popular, important, famous and influential bands ever.

Nevermind

Nirvana's second studio album after their debut album Bleach (1989) was released on September 24, 1991. It was given the name Nevermind. The cover is pretty much expressing the whole album original and sarcastic. While some people can find the cover weird, we can be quite happy it turned out to look how it looks rumours are that Cobain originally wanted the cover to picture... underwater birth. Fortunately, the producer found it being too much. Although this album wasn't expected to achieve a major commercial success, it didn't take long and Nevermind became #1 on the Billboard 200 chart, where it replaced Michel Jackson's Dangerous.



Nevermind officially contains 12 songs:

- 1. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" (5:01)
- 2. "In Bloom" (4:14)
- 3. "Come As You Are" (3:39)
- 4. "Breed" (3:03)
- 5. "Lithium" (4:17)
- 6. "Polly" (2:57)
- 7. "Territorial Pissings" (2:22)
- 8. "Drain You" (3:43)
- 9. "Lounge Act" (2:36)
- 10. "Stay Away" (3:32)
- 11. "On A Plain" (3:16)
- 12. "Something In The Way" (20:35)

In fact, there is a thirteenth song hidden in "Something In The Way". "Something In The Way" ends at 3:51 followed by 10 minutes of silence. Then, the "Endless Nameless" Except "Smells Like Teen Spirit" which was written by all members, all songs were written by Kurt Cobain.

1. "Smells Like Teen Spirit"

I dare to say there is not a lot of people who have not heard this song yet. The riff of this song became part of the "basic music knowledge". Placed as the opening track, "Smells Like Teen Spirit" became the most famous and successful song of Nirvana ever, placing #6 on Billboard Hot 100. This song was written party by all members and soon became kind of anthem of the band. The success was that huge that, later on, Nirvana actually refused to play this song at concerts, because they had to play it so many times that they started to hate it.

Especially chorus is unbelievably catchy and lyrics are quite interesting, because they have actually never been surely encrypted. Cobain would often change some words in live performance, add sentence here and there or just simply not articulate good enough. About the meaning, Cobain said:

"The entire song is made up of contradictory ideas [. . .] It's just making fun of the thought of having a revolution. But it's a nice thought."

This song has also well done music video. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" had win pretty much every important award available and is considered to be one of the most influential song ever and is often mentioned as the song that pushed alternative rock to become mainstream.

→ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTWKbfoikeg

2. "Come As You Are"

Another Nirvana's song featured on *Nevermind*, "Come As You Are" reached #32 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and even higher in other charts in UK. Although so different, this song gained nearly the same popularity as "Smells Like Teen Spirit".

Famous for its opening, really catchy riff combined with Cobain's voice that had been double tracked for fuller, softer sound, "Come As You Are" is, as Cobain said, about people and what they're expected to act like. The lyrics are intentionally contradictory and confusing as in these lines: "come, as a friend, as an old enemy" or "take your time, hurry up". Also, the part of the song where Cobain sings: "And I swear that I don't have a gun" is sadly being associated with Cobain's suicide in 1994.

→ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vabnZ9-ex7o

3. "Lithium"

Fifth song on the album, "Lithium", also belongs to the band's most famous songs, reaching #64 on Billboard Hot 100. Although recorded before, "Lithium" had been re-recorded and put on Nevermind in 1991. Typical for this song is transferring between the loud and quit sections, which was used in other song on this album as well.

What is not that typical is its religious content. As Cobain said, the songs reflects a man turning into religion after the death of his girlfriend as into "the last resort to keep himself alive, to keep him from suicide". Although the lyrics may seem like criticism of religion, Cobain also added

"I've always felt that some people should have religion in their lives [. . .] That's fine. If it's going to save someone, it's okay. And the person in ['Lithium'] needed it."

→ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkcJEvMcnEg

4. "Polly"

After "Lithium", the sixth track on Nevermind is called "Polly". Originally named "Hitchhiker" or "Cracker", this song has been around with the band since at least 1988. In fact, "Polly" should have been on Nirvana's first, debut album Bleach, but Cobain found it not really matching with the mood of the rest of the album. Being entirely acoustic, "Polly" really stands out.

Sadly, the story reflected by this song is based on a real story. Young, 14-year-old girl had been kidnapped when she was returning from a concert and had been raped and tortured by a stranger. His real name was Gerald Friend (probably the worst last name he could get). In the end, she finally escaped and survived and her torturer had been arrested.

→ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scmOYyBRdy8

5. "Something In The Way"

The last song I choose to mention is the last track of *Nevermind*, "Something In The Way". Meaning of this song is very clear. Kurt Cobain goes back to when he used to be homeless and live under the bridge. The name – something in the way – is actually expressing his feelings in that period of time – like if everything was always going to fail, like there was no hope for things to get better, like there was always *something in the way*.

In fact, while this song was being recorded, Cobain was singing so quietly that his recording levels had to be turned all the way up. Not really much to add about this one. Just listen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNVu55ZyC-Y

The huge success of *Nevermind* was really unexpected, but breaking all expectations, album had been later on certified Diamond (over 10 millions copies sold). This album was one of the most influential albums especially important for development of rock music, helping it become more "mainstream". Still popular after more than 15 years, *Nevermind* is definitely one of the best rock albums ever made. Enjoy.