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Mondo Culture-0:

When Politicians Could Speak

by Gillian G. Gaar

Every now and then, I feel like my past has leapt up to surround me once again. Now, I have actually had people tell me, at times, that I talk too much about Nirvana. Can you imagine such a thing! After all, I tried to say, it's my job, given that I write about them at every opportunity. To this day they've remained the "Seattle Scene" band that's had the biggest impact in rock music; even at gatherings of today's alterna-youth, you're bound to see someone in the crowd wearing a Nirvana shirt.

So why should it be a surprise that I find myself immersed in them yet again? Perhaps it began when I saw Krist Novoselic playing bass with Flipper at El Corazon in December, a warm-up show prior to a UK jaunt (and possible recordings in the new year). The show was all-ages- appropriate, considering that Krist had campaigned to make such shows possible in this city.

We've had the release of **Live! Tonight! Sold Out!!** on DVD at last, a wonderful collection of live footage (including the awesome Halloween '91 show at the Paramount). There's two new books out on drummer Dave Grohl; skip the wildly inaccurate clip job that is Dave Grohl:



Nothing to Lose (Reynolds and Hearn) for The Dave Grohl Story by Jeff Apter (Omnibus Press, a fine publisher), which is far more detailed and actually has new interviews.

Courtney Love has her own offerings to share, Dirty Blonde: The Diaries of Courtney Love (Faber and Faber, Inc.), a grab-bag assortment of poetry, lists, photos, and other ephemera that's as intriguing as the woman herself.

And did anyone catch The Return of Courtney Love on VH1? The interviewer, a Brit named Will Yapp, was allowed to follow Ms. Love around for a few weeks, as she discoursed on such subjects as her love of Buddhism ("I believe that through chanting you can change your DNA") while dropping in the usual wry observations ("A lot of people just like having me around as a pet rock star"). She's also recording a new album, which she and producer Linda Perry are determined to make better than the last one (America's Sweetheart). One-time "Kurtney" chronicler Everett True finally offers up his own extensive discourse on the subject, in Nirvana: The True Story (it's a pun, geddit?), which will be published in the US in '07 as, simply, Nirvana: The Biography (Omnibus Press, a very fine publisher). Everett really wears his heart on his sleeve in this massive book (the main text runs to 584 pages), and anyone who lived through those years, especially if you lived here, is well advised to read it.

There's also a DVD examination of In Utero just out ("A Classic Album Under Review"), with some commentary from people who knew the band, but mostly from journalists. Instead, why not pick up the latest in Continuum's 33 1/3 series, a fine, richly detailed book about In Utero by me! Yes, it's finally out, ready for consumption, as is my second book of the year, Green Day: Rebels With A Cause (Omnibus Press, an excellent publisher), which I can guarantee is the only Green Day book out there that references Margaret Cho, Luis Bunuel, and Senator Hillary Clinton! It's out in the UK now, but will be published in the US in '07. And if you just can't wait, go to amazon.co.uk. I thank you.

Now that the self-promotion's out of the way, I point you in the direction of Gore Vidal, and his new memoir, Point to Point Navigation (Doubleday). A sequel, of sorts, to his previous memoir, Palimpsest, and if it's not nearly as long, it's still just as divine reading Gore's thoughts on movies, politics, the many and varied people he's known, and his poignant account of the death of his longtime partner, Howard Austen. Also has one of my new favorite lines, in response to an earlier quote of his about how one should never pass up the opportunity to have sex or be on TV, "Advice I would never today in the age of AIDS and its television equivalent Fox News," he writes. I've already bought another copy to give as a present.

If you're at loose ends on Christmas day, why not take in something light and frothy, like the movie musical Dreamgirls, set to open then? The story's based on the saga of the Supremes and the rise of Motown, except with a happy ending (Effie, the Florence Ballard counterpart, doesn't die as Ballard did, but lives to perform at the "Dreamettes" final show). It's admittedly a surface look at the subject, but director Bill Condon makes it dazzle. And while Jennifer Hudson is copping most of the kudos as Effie, I really warmed to Eddie Murphy's James "Thunder" Early, a singer in the James Brown mold whose flashy braggadocio nonetheless has an undeniable charm. See you next year, friends and fans!



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