

Nirvana Set Has Smell Of Success DGC Plans Low-Key Approach For 'In Utero'

■ BY CRAIG ROSEN

LOS ANGELES—"Teen-aged angst has paid off well/Now I'm bored and old," sings Kurt Cobain on "Serve The Servants," the opening track of Nirvana's new album, "In Utero."

With 1991's "Nevermind" having sold more than 4.6 million copies in the U.S., according to SoundScan, DGC is cautiously optimistic that "In Utero," due Tuesday (21), also will pay off. Yet the label is taking a low-key approach to marketing the album, in an effort to avoid hype.

Robert Smith, head of marketing for Geffen/DGC, says, "We want this record to be discovered in the same way that 'Nevermind' was—through the music and how powerful the band is."

In order to do that, Smith says the label "will set things up, duck, and get out of the way," as it did for "Nevermind."

Geffen/DGC set up "In Utero" with a street campaign that included prerelease snipes with the album's title posted in major cities such as New York, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles. In addition, the label distributed stickers of the cover art—a rendering of the transparent "Visible Woman" model, with angel's wings—at the New Music Seminar in July, and at various alternative retail outlets across the country.

In keeping with the alternative market, Geffen/DGC will also issue the album on vinyl.

The label has been advertising "In Utero" with an eye toward the alternative audience. "We're going with Alternative Press, as opposed to En-

tertainment Weekly," Smith says.

On the television front, the band is set to perform on the Saturday (25) season premiere of "Saturday Night Live," and also is planning an appearance on MTV's "Unplugged" later this fall.

While Nirvana undoubtedly will be supported whole-heartedly by alternative accounts, even the chains are gearing up for the release.

"We're buying it like any other superstar product," says Mark Michel, director of purchasing for the 21-store, Miramar, Fla.-based Peaches Entertainment chain.

The track "Heart-Shaped Box" was serviced to college, alternative, and album rock radio in early September, although there currently are no plans for a commercial single release. The track entered at the Modern Rock Tracks chart at No. 7 and

the U.K. singles chart at No. 5 last week, and already is generating a significant buzz.

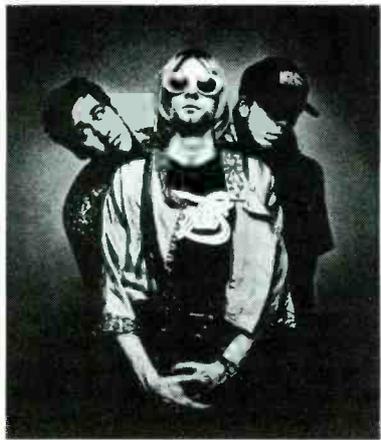
"We're playing it all the time," says Steve Masters, MD at modern rock KITS (Live 105) San Francisco. "It's performing really well. It's our most requested song." Masters characterizes the whole album as "brilliant."

At this point, Geffen isn't actively courting top 40, which jumped on the "Smells Like Teen Spirit" bandwagon following MTV's support of the video. "Inevitably, top 40 will be involved," Smith says. "[But] Nirvana didn't sell nearly 5 million because of a hit single. They sold that many albums because of who they are."

Nirvana is, of course, one of the more controversial acts to top The
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A Kiss Is Just A Kiss. Atlantic act the Stone Temple Pilots donned Kiss-style make-up for one of its two sold-out shows at New York City's Roseland Theater. Label staffers kissed up to the band after the show. From left are the Pilots' Eric Kretz; Atlantic manager of product development Amira Ruotola-Largent; band member Weiland; Atlantic national college marketing coordinator Jason Linn; Atlantic progressive marketing coordinator Silvio Bonvini; band member Robert DeLeo; Atlantic manager of national press and publicity Lisa Gray; Atlantic intern Coleen Lehman; and band member Dean DeLeo.



NIRVANA: Krist Novoselic, Kurt Cobain, and David Grohl.

Fier, Carson Take Reins On Palominos' New Album

■ BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—"The music had to change," says drummer Anton Fier of his endeavors with the Golden Palominos, and indeed, the group's first Restless album, "This Is How It Feels," exhibits some new directions for the decade-old unit.

While the lineup on the album includes such stalwarts as bassist Bill Laswell and guitarist Nicky Skopelitis, former Geffen solo artist Lori Carson co-wrote and took the lead vocal role on nine of the set's 12 tracks (singer Lydia Kavannah is featured on the other three numbers). Former James Brown and P-Funk bassist Bootsy Collins also

is featured—on guitar.

Fier, the lone constant in the Palominos over the years, had featured Amanda Kramer of the Information Society on the group's last two records, "A Dead Horse" (released by Celluloid in 1989) and "Drunk With Passion" (issued by Giant in 1991). But the collapse of Celluloid quickly followed the release of "Horse," and Fier says Giant promoted "Drunk" only half-heartedly, leaving him disillusioned.

"Although I like those records very much, nobody else did," Fier says. "It was like a pattern of frustration, both for myself and Amanda. There was so much dread involved."

But Fier, who had wanted to produce Carson after hearing the demos for her Geffen album, speaks glowingly about the singer's work with the Palominos. "It's like a dream that I had five years ago is finally being realized," he says.

Fier, who used vocalists as diverse as Michael Stipe, John Lydon, and Syd Straw on earlier records, says Carson and Kavannah are almost solely responsible for carrying the melodies on "This Is How It Feels," which he says was his attempt to forge "a rhythm-

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Artists Rise To Defend Animal Rights; Divine Showmanship At Radio City

DEFENSE FUND: Michael Stipe, Concrete Blonde, Helmet, and Skinny Puppy are among the artists providing previously unreleased tracks to "In Defense Of Animals," a compilation album to be released by Restless Records Sept. 28, which will benefit the animal rights group from which the project takes its name. Pearl Jam, Consolidated, Primus, Boogie Down Productions, Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy, Lush, and five other bands have donated previously released songs for the cause.

The record is the brainchild of Consolidated's drummer, Philip Steir, who worked at IDA between two of the band's records. One of the highlights for Steir was working with Stipe. Totally coincidentally, Steir had gotten a fan letter from Stipe, complimenting him on his work with Consolidated. Steir, incredulous that Stipe would write him, called R.E.M.'s management; they agreed that the letter must be fake, but still said they would tell Stipe that Steir had called to thank him for the letter. A few minutes later, Steir's phone rang, and Stipe was on the other end, confirming that, indeed, he was the writer of the fan letter. Steir asked him if he would contribute a song for the project, "and he went into the studio the next day. It was incredible. He was the easiest person I've ever worked with," Steir says. "He covered a song by Robyn Hitchcock, called 'Arms Of Love.'"

Steir had lined up a label and most of the artists for the project when he had to leave to begin producing Grace Jones. The original label fell through, and IDA special projects coordinator Cathy Cohn picked up the ball and pitched the idea to several record companies, including Restless. She also solicited more artists.

Restless Records president Joe Regis says the label was attracted instantly to the project. "I thought it was a great cause, and great music," Regis says. "I thought the organization needed to be in the spotlight, because they do good work. They already had the support of the artist community."

Now it has the support of Restless, which Regis says is planning a major advertising campaign around the \$15.98 CD. In addition to consumer-oriented ads, Restless is also supporting the album via co-op retail dollars. "And we're discounting it to get it in front racks," adds

Regis.

Although no singles will be released, Regis says the album will be serviced to several different radio formats. Also, while no videos are planned per se, Regis says that if enough of the involved artists show interest, Restless will fund PSAs that will be sent to music video outlets.

The cause will be supported further by an October 7 record release party/benefit concert in San Francisco that will feature Consolidated and 4 Non Blondes. A party also is being planned for Los Angeles on Thursday (30).

In addition to raising funds, Cohn says the other major goal is to raise awareness about IDA and animal rights in general. "There are so many ways that animals are abused in this society that people don't know about," she says. "Contemporary artists supporting such an [organization] really has an impact and opens doors."



by Melinda Newman

YOU KNOW IT'S GOING to be a night to remember when you call to R.S.V.P., say your last name is Newman, and the publicist asks, "Is that Melinda or Paul?" So it was with the opening night of Bette Midler's six-week stand at Radio City Music Hall Sept. 14. Midler, who will play 30 dates at the New York venue, left the crowd screaming for more as she alternated between salacious, hilarious, stand-up comedy and vocals that swooped and swelled from a whisper to full throttle. The undisputable highlight was a 20-minute sketch about wheelchair-bound mermaid Delores Del Lago's new infomercial, "Twelve Strokes To Satisfaction," currently airing on the Home Fishing Network. The routine was pure Midler—part schtick, part goofball inspiration, all brilliantly executed. And no other performer on earth could have carried off the finale: a fin-flipping wheelchair chorus line to "New York, New York" that put the Rockettes to shame. No, we didn't see the other Newman character, but among those in attendance at the show or Metropolitan Museum party afterward were Lauren Bacall, Barbara Walters, Mike Wallace, Mercedes Ruehl, Mary Tyler Moore, Cyndi Lauper, Mike Myers, Scott Glenn, Peter Riegert, Madeline Kahn, Barbara Hershey, Barry Diller, Mike Ovitz, and Ashford & Simpson.



ANTON FIER