

ROCK MUSIC

94 REWIND

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Somehow or another, we all found time to listen to them whine.

When it came time to choose an artist of the year in the world of music, one band immediately was the obvious choice. Not because of sheer talent, but because for most of the year you couldn't step out of your house or turn on the tube without getting a daily dose of "Dookie."

Yes, Green Day is the choice for artist of the year. After minimal success with their first two independent releases, their third album, "Dookie," sold much better than the title might suggest.

MTV got a hold of the video for "Longview" and the rest is history.

After airing that and the "Basket Case" video on ridiculous max-rotation for months at a time, the album has sold more than 3,000,000 copies. And their spot on the Lollapalooza tour and infamous Woodstock mudfight set has only increased their extreme exposure.

For many, the big question is why? The lyrics aren't exactly the most intelligent, the music is dominated by three chord guitar rock that is repetitive at best, and lead singer Billie Joe looks like he's having seizures when he sings, complete with airborne saliva.

Simply put, Green Day is just fun music. Of course Billie Joe's lyrics won't be as deep as Eddie Vedder's or Kurt Cobain's. And the band's pastel flavor is nothing like the popular darkness of Billy Corgan and Trent Reznor. Green Day is fast, danceable/moshable music that is flat-out good to listen to.

The other big question that surrounds Green Day is whether or not it is feasible to classify the band as punk. The fact is, it's too pop to be punk. Johnny Rotten wouldn't have been caught dead singing "I'm so damn bored I'm going blind and I smell like sh—" or "I sit around and watch the tube but nothing's on."

Punk influence? Yes. Punk music? Nope. There's just no pop in punk.

At this summer's Lollapalooza tour, I had the opportunity to interview the band, an opportunity that I relished. Unfortunately, the band members take themselves a bit too seriously as rebel punks.

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By Rob Clark
THE BATTALION

1994 — the year punk came back from the dead in the body of pop music, rap was barely heard over the scream of police sirens, music legends returned for massive albums and tours and the rock world lost one of its most talented and innovative artists to suicide.

Women in Rock

The year started out promising enough, with the release of the best album of the year, Tori Amos' "Under the Pink." An astonishing achievement, the album was a melodic feast with Amos' exquisite piano skills and stunning voice. It was no holds barred on this album, as Amos questioned religion on "God" ("God sometimes you just don't come through/Do you need a woman to look after you?") and the discovery of masturbation on "Icicle."

But Amos wasn't the only woman pushing the envelope in lyrical content. Liz Phair's sophomore effort "Whip Smart" wasn't quite the f-word fest that her 1993 debut "Exile in Guyville" was, but her clever guitar skills and sassy attitude vaulted her to the cover of Rolling Stone.

In fact, 1994 was a banner year for women in rock. From the acoustic stylings of Sheryl Crow and her monster hit "All I Wanna Do" to the urban alternafunk of Luscious Jackson, women made more noise than ever in '94.

Live Through This

Tragedy struck the rock ranks with the suicide of Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain. Cobain's body was found in his Seattle home with a self-inflicted gunshot wound on April 8.

And as conservative media critics such as Andy Rooney scoffed at Cobain's importance, young America mourned the loss of perhaps the most creative and innovative artist of our time.

Nirvana changed the face of music with their explosive 1991 debut "Nevermind," capturing the ideology of teenage angst in the grunge style that became the blueprint for success for the rest of the so-called alternative groups.

Success came fast and furious for Nirvana, and ultimately became a major thorn in Cobain's side. His life was tormented enough with a heroin addiction and a seemingly continual state of hopelessness, combined with the sudden extreme demands of being a rock star. Cobain's "escape" left Nirvana without a leader, Courtney Love without a husband, and Frances Bean Cobain without a father.

But the end of the year brought the release of Nirvana's "MTV Unplugged" album, providing the world with one last listen to Cobain's immense talent.

Meanwhile, Courtney Love was left to pick up the pieces. Her band Hole's debut album "Live Through This" was a smash with the critics and had just taken off commercially at the time of Cobain's death. Tragedy struck again with the death of Hole bass guitarist Kristen Pfaff. Late in the year, a second single "Doll Parts" was released and the video was played on maximum rotation on MTV. And after a few brief appearances on the summer Lollapalooza tour, Hole was back on the road at the end of '94.

The Return of Punk

One of the most talked about events in '94 was the revival of punk music. Green Day and Offspring were the two bands most associated with resuscitating the loud, frenzied style of The Sex Pistols and The Clash.

But the '90s style of punk had one element distinctly different than '70s punk — the power of pop. There is no question that Green Day's music has that fast guitar sound, but the melodies are strictly Top 40 territory. Green Day and Offspring capitalized on MTV's fascination with the punk revival, with the videos for "Basket Case" and "Self Esteem" playing slightly more than 17 times an hour.

The Year in Rap — It's a Doggy Dogg World

Between Snoop Doggy Dogg's murder and drug charges, Tupac Shakur's murder, assault and sexual abuse charges, Lisa Lopes' arson charges and Flavor Flav's assault charges, rappers found themselves taking Ice Cube's song "Amerikkka's Most Wanted" a bit too far.

When rappers weren't making headlines in police reports, the most noise came from the West Coast where the Dr. Dre/Snoop Doggy Dogg gangsta style reigned supreme. Dre's half-brother Warren G. hit it big with "Regulate" but slipped with his terribly tuneless "Do You See." Fellow west coast rapper Coolio had the surprise hit of the year with "Fantastic Voyage."

In other rap news, the most disappointing album of the year had to be Public Enemy's "Muse-Sick 'N' Hour Mess Age." After ruling over the rap world for five years, PE fell from the throne with a rather unceremonious thud.

The best in rap this year came from the Brooklyn trio A Tribe Called Quest. While supporting their "Midnight Marauders" album, the group embarked on a tour with De La Soul and the summer Lollapalooza tour.

'80s stars fall

It seems only yesterday that albums like "Purple Rain," "Like a Virgin" and "Thriller" were at the top of the charts. But in '94, Prince, Madonna and Michael Jackson found out the success of the '80s does not translate into success in the '90s.

Still reeling from criticism of his bizarre symbol name change, Prince released two albums last year, the awful "Come" and the classic "Black Album." But only one song hit the top 10 — the disgustingly sugary-sweet "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World."

Madonna continued her downward spiral with a ridiculous appearance on "The Late Show with David Letterman" and a mediocre response to her new romantic side on her "Bedtime Stories" album.

But if it was a bad year for anyone, it had to be Michael Jackson. Child molestation charges and an addiction to painkillers kept Jackson plastered on tabloid covers all year. And the weirdest marriage in years to Lisa Marie Presley kept America wondering how that cute little kid could grow up to be so damn weird.

Geritol Rock

A number of older rockers put away their rockers and wheelchairs and came back to perform in monster tours. The Rolling Stones returned with

their strongest album in years and their "Voodoo Lounge" tour was the highest grossing tour of the year. But close behind were Pink Floyd and their "Division Bell" album and tour.

Perhaps the most anticipated reunions were the Eagles and Led Zepelin. With the help of "MTV Unplugged" sessions, the '70s veterans returned to the top of the charts.

Ticket to Ride

Pearl Jam took on the world in 1994, especially with their battle with Ticketmaster over service charges on the band's concert tickets. Guitarists Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard testified before Congress in July against Ticketmaster in an attempt to keep ticket prices affordable for their fans.

With Kurt Cobain gone, many placed the unfair title of "voice of our generation" on the hefty but unwilling shoulders of Pearl Jam. The band responded by releasing "Vitalogy," an album that was more experimental than their first two.

The Mudfight in Saugerties, N.Y.

Woodstock '94 overcame the label of being too corporate and a sellout version of the original when 350,000 people journeyed to Saugerties, N.Y. for three more days of peace and music. Performances from artists as diverse as Nine Inch Nails, Salt 'N' Pepa, Live, Bob Dylan, Green Day, Porno for Pyros and Sheryl Crow kept the massive audience entertained while rain poured down, creating a haven for those with an appreciation for mud.

A Look Forward

What will 1995 hold? Look for tours from R.E.M., Pearl Jam and possibly even the artist formerly known as Prince. The big rap news will come from the Dr. Dre/Ice Cube album "Helter Skelter" and the continuing trials of Snoop Doggy Dogg and Tupac Shakur. Will Green Day continue its mass market ascent? Will Nine Inch Nails be the next big alternative act to make it into the



Kurt Cobain

mainstream? Will the Billboard charts and Grammy Awards still be dominated by pop or will creative alternative and rap music be embraced?

Listen and find out. We'll keep you posted. It ought to be interesting.



A Tribe Called Quest performed on the Lollapalooza tour and had one of the best albums of the year with "Midnight Marauders."



Tori Amos' "Under the Pink" album was the top album of 1994.

Best and Worst Albums of '94

The 10 best albums of the year

1. Tori Amos — "Under the Pink"
2. Nirvana — "MTV Unplugged in New York"
3. Liz Phair — "Whip Smart"
4. Green Day — "Dookie"
5. A Tribe Called Quest — "Midnight Marauders"
6. Hole — "Live Through This"
7. Sheryl Crow — "Tuesday Night Music Club"
8. R.E.M. — "Monster"
9. Luscious Jackson — "Natural Ingredients"
10. Nine Inch Nails — "The Downward Spiral"

The 10 worst albums of the year

1. Salt 'N' Pepa — "Very Necessary"
2. Public Enemy — "Muse-Sick 'N' Hour Mess-Age"
3. Candlebox — "Candlebox"
4. Collective Soul — "Hints, Allegations, and Things Left Unsaid"
5. Boyz II Men — "II"
6. Prince — "Come"
7. Da Brat — "Funkdafied"
8. Offspring — "Smash"
9. Snoop Doggy Dogg — "Doggystyle"
10. Anything by Michael Bolton, Mariah Carey, Toni Braxton or Whitney Houston



Green Day