

SONIC HIGHWAYS, SEATTLE

Seattle

The episode starts with Grohl listening to early songs he wrote in 1992 before his solo career.

---The city is very I _____, described as "A little town vibe that has a big city attitude."

The city has an eagerness to try new things, which is great for new music styles. The long gloomy winters make extra time for working on musical projects.

---From Seattle- Duff McKeegan, Chris Cornell, The sisters from Heart, Nirvana producer Jack Endino.

Grohl Moves to Seattle

---Grohl visited 3 months before he moved there. Moved there with N _____, knew no one. Says he owes it all to Seattle, his phantom limb. Stops by S _____ P _____ (Seattle Grunge label) shop at airport.

---Home to: Nate Mendel, bass player for the Foo's and Sunny Day Real Estate, A _____ in Chains, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Soundgarden.

That weird studio down from Dave's house...

---Robert L _____ Studios, described as the coolest place ever with a great natural drum sound, which is key to recordings that use real drums.

---In terms of studio design, it's like a bizarre C _____ underground, no parallel W _____, surfaces are all U _____ and its stone. Nothing resonates too much, which gives a natural sound. For Grohl it is a special place, it's the last place N _____ recorded and the first place he recorded as a solo artist, representing S _____ over.

(Opened in 1974, one of his first clients was the local high school jazz band with sax player, Kenny G (Led the smooth jazz movement in the late 80's.)

---Sound Garden recorded their masterpiece here called *Superunknown*, as did Alice in chains and Dave Matthews. How ironic that an underground studio records "underground" music.)

A Studio Tour with RL

---Started with a small 20' x 20' garage and he D _____ everything out, shovel by shovel. Continues digging for over _____ years. He traded S _____ time for digging help. No prior building experience. He chooses marble and stone as building materials.

---Dave M _____ did a live record there, Death Cab for Cutie recorded there as well.

---Robert Lang grew up 3 blocks from the studio. Seattle is home to Boeing Aerospace.

---Nancy Wilson, guitar player from H _____ grew up there.

---This era was pre- Amazon pre- Nike

---Jimi H _____ and Ray C _____ grew up in Seattle

---Also from Seattle: The Ventures (surf band), The Wailers (60's garage band *Louie Louie*), Paul Reeve, The Sonics (*The Witch*), The North West Sound

The S _____ (Formed in 1960)

---Their aggressive hard edged sound that has a major influence on punk and garage rock. They were a major influence on the White Stripes (formed 1997 Hit: Seven Nation Army.) Their sound was way ahead of its time.

---The NW Sound- utilized a guitar dropped tuning sound later made popular by Black Sabbath

---Kind of grungy before grunge

---S _____ Castle – was a concert venue (Also the name of a famous Hendrix tune)

---J _____ H _____ wanted to jam with them, they declined.

H_____ (formed 1970)

---Two sisters from Seattle hit it big in 1977. Songs: *Magic Man, Crazy on You, Barracuda, Little Queen, Straight On, Even it up*. 80's ballads: *What About Love, Alone, These Dreams, Nothin' At All*.

---Sister Ann (vocals) joined a band and Nancy (guitar) later teamed up.

---"We were trying to put a poetic spin on J_____ music, trying to make a musical statement.

---80's Punk Scene bubbles up in Seattle – *The Blackouts* are a popular band.

---Many touring acts skipped Seattle because it was too far out of the traditional touring circuit.

---If people wanted to hear M_____, they had to make it T_____.

--- Because bands played as hobbyists, they took more R_____, and from that attitude, many bands created their own S_____.

M_____, Green River, Mud H_____

---S_____ P_____ Records – started as F_____, columns in magazines, sold cassettes and a compilation. That compilation sold 5_____ copies.

---Started with Green River and S_____ *Screaming Life* EP, opened offices and started a biz.

---No record sales E_____, screwed up and learned. They had no thought of C_____ success.

---Musicians had day jobs

---Jack Endino had a studio and relationship with Bruce Pavitt and Jonathan Poneman, Sun Pop Owners.

---Charles Petersen – A P_____ who captured action pictures of the music scene.

M_____ H_____ --- They wrote songs that were sloppy but catchy and influenced many kids to form bands, like Ben Gibbard of **D_____ C_____ for Cutie (Formed in Bellingham Washington in 1997.)**

---**The Sonics** never knew their influence on the scene breaking up in 1967.

N_____ (Formed in Aberdeen, Washington in 1987)

---They were latecomers to the scene. They didn't have a name.

---Gained traction but G_____ didn't join until after the first record, "Bleach."

---Girls liked Nirvana, which wasn't the case in Grohl's previous bands.

---In a clever marketing move, Sub Pop hired an English journalist to write about their bands and called Nirvana, "America's A_____ to the B_____,", and major labels then showed interest.

---Since he was a kid, Grohl played guitar and wrote songs on his own. Grohl had recorded 40 songs on his own and didn't want to disrupt the flow of Nirvana, so he just played C_____ 's music.

(What's funny is Dave's embarrassment to his early music that he hasn't heard in 20 years, proving that it takes at least 40 songs to get good at songwriting.)

---The Sub Pop owner explains why he had to sell Nirvana's contract to a major label. We were cash strapped and never thought Nirvana would become the next B_____. *(Sam Phillips faced this same situation with Elvis.)*

Rain City Renaissance

---Brings the emergence of noisy- punk- metal- grunge rock with bands like Nirvana, Soundgarden, Alice I_____ C_____, and P_____ J_____ who all hailed from S_____, Washington.

---Nirvana makes the cover of R_____ S_____ and becomes very successful.

---Everyone joined the cause and grunge became a F_____ statement with sales of flannel and boots skyrocketing. The local scene dries up because all the good Seattle bands signed record deals and left to tour the world.

Back to the Studio

We get a glimpse of the song creating process

---With 7 mics around a drum kit, the cymbals can often take over and become too loud. They'll combat this by using two drummers in separate rooms. Dave plays cymbals, Taylor plays drums. As a drummer, this is very weird to try to do, luckily the song they are working on is slower and mellower than most of their songs.

K_____ C_____ 's Death (1994)

---Everyone is affected and the band breaks up. A generation grieved, much like the death of John Lennon in 1980.

---Grohl goes to I _____, he didn't listen to music or watch TV

---Grohl---"Music was the one thing that would help me out of that dark place" demonstrating the healing power of music.

---Grohl records with his friend Barrett Strong, they make cassettes of the tracks and give them away.

---Grohl starts over with nothing left to lose. The Foo Fighters come into existence.

---The Seattle scene is like a big family. *(What's extremely sad in this scene is Soundgarden singer Chris Cornell, who would commit suicide in 2017 and again cause a generation to grieve.)*

Seattle Hip Hop

---**Macklemore** (Ben Haggerty and producer Ryan Lewis) from Seattle— They were underground for 15 years. The Seattle hip hop scene was small and they didn't expect much. They did all the music T _____ and even started their own record L _____.

(The single, Thrift Shop, hit #1 in 2013. It was the first #1 since 1994 to hit the major charts without the support of a major label. This is the blueprint of the new music business for up and coming artists. They have had much success and won 4 Grammy awards in 2014.)

Bruce Pavitt Advice "The R _____ starts at home. "Create a culture and eventually it could blow up. That's what happened in Seattle."

(Pavitt wrote this in 1980 and I find it fascinating. Quite the insight and self-fulfilling prophecy:

"When people buy a record, they are not only plugging into the music, but into the values and lifestyle that are implied by the artist. By supporting huge Hollywood music corporations, you (yes you), are not only allowing middle aged capitalists to dictate what goes over the airwaves, but promote macho pig-fuck bands whose entire lifestyle revolves around cocaine, sexism, money and more money. The 80s need new sounds and just as much they need new heroes."

---What's ironic about this statement? The same lifestyle trappings of fame described here became an issue with many, if not all, Seattle bands. Being famous can ruin many aspects of your life or worse yet, kill you.)

---The Sonics have reunited, Heart is still active and Sub Pop is still going out of business, lol.

---The Sub Pop shop at the Seattle airport is a hit.

A Postscript about Lang's studio

---In the last 10 years the studio saw a decline in big budget projects. Lang almost lost the studio to foreclosure. However, he has recorded these stars, Portugal the Man, Macklemore and Kesha.

---The studio is now a recording Academy for aspiring audio engineers.

Song Subterranean