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News

Soundgarden Disbands

by Marcus Errico
Apr 9, 1997, 12:00 PM PT



Soundgarden, the first of Seattle's so-called grunge groups to sign with a major label during the late '80s feeding frenzy, officially disbanded Wednesday, after 12 years, three platinum albums and two Grammys.

In a terse statement issued simultaneously by A&M Records and on Soundgarden's official Website, the group said it had "amicably and mutually decided to disband to pursue other interests...Soundgarden would like to thank all their fans for support throughout the years."

Fans were equally appreciative of their favorite band. "Part of me is sad, but I knew it would happen sometime soon," writes one fan in the band's newsgroup. "Hey, they ended on a great note, and didn't become worn out toads, a la Aerosmith. Thanks for the ride, guys." "Say it ain't so," another pleaded.

In February, Soundgarden had announced it would take the summer off--the first time it wouldn't be touring since 1988--and begin working on a new album this fall. The band had completed a five-week U.S. tour supporting its last album, 1996's *Down on the Upside*, in December then headed down under for 12 dates in New Zealand and Australia earlier this year. Its final scheduled concert was February 9 in Honolulu's Blaisdell Arena.

Borrowing its name from a lakeside pipe sculpture that made "music" when the wind gusted, the band formed in Seattle in 1984. The original lineup included the hirsute Kim Thayil on lead guitar, fellow Illinois transplant Hiro Yamamoto on bass and Chris Cornell on drums. A year later, Scott Sundquist signed on as the drummer, allowing Cornell to front the band.

After paying their dues on the local bar scene, Soundgarden became the first band to record on Seattle's ground-breaking indie label Sub-Pop. After two Sub-Pop EPs, the band recorded their debut disk *Ultramega OK* on the tiny SST label in 1988.

The band's plodding *Louder Than Love* marked its big label debut on A&M in 1990 and garnered a Grammy nod for best metal performance. With new bassist Ben Shepherd on board, Soundgarden finally hit their stride with 1991's *Badmotorfinger*--the breakthrough album that let the quartet enjoy the same commercial success as hometown cohorts Nirvana and Pearl Jam.

Suddenly, Soundgarden was hot--in MTV's Buzz Bin, opening for Guns n' Roses, playing Lollapalooza, on the cover of *Rolling*

tonight on

True Hollywood Story: Why Chris Farley was really America's saddest clown; 8 p.m.






Stone. In 1994, *Superunknown* debuted at number one, sold even more copies than *Badmotorfinger*, spawned two hit singles ("Spoonman" and "Black Hole Sun") and wound up winning two Grammys. Soundgarden has sold more than 20 million copies of their five A&M albums.

Audio Clip: Soundgarden, "Black Hole Sun"
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According to today's statement, "there is no word at this time on any of the members future plans." However, members of the band have played in side projects: there was the one-off Temple of the Dog in 1991 with some Pearl Jam pals and Shepherd and Cameron have also recorded an album with their band, Hater.

(Updated 3 p.m. PT)

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