

STAGEBILL NOVEMBER 1997



LINCOLN CENTER



Avery Fisher Hall  
Lincoln Center

Home of  
The New York Philharmonic

*Friday Evening, November 21, 1997, at 8:00*

Rock Hotel Int'l & Avery Fisher Hall  
present

GUITAR FUTURISM

*New Music By*

SONIC YOUTH

*with special guest*  
TOM VERLAINE  
and  
JIMMY RIP  
*(Instrumental Duo)*



Michael Lavine





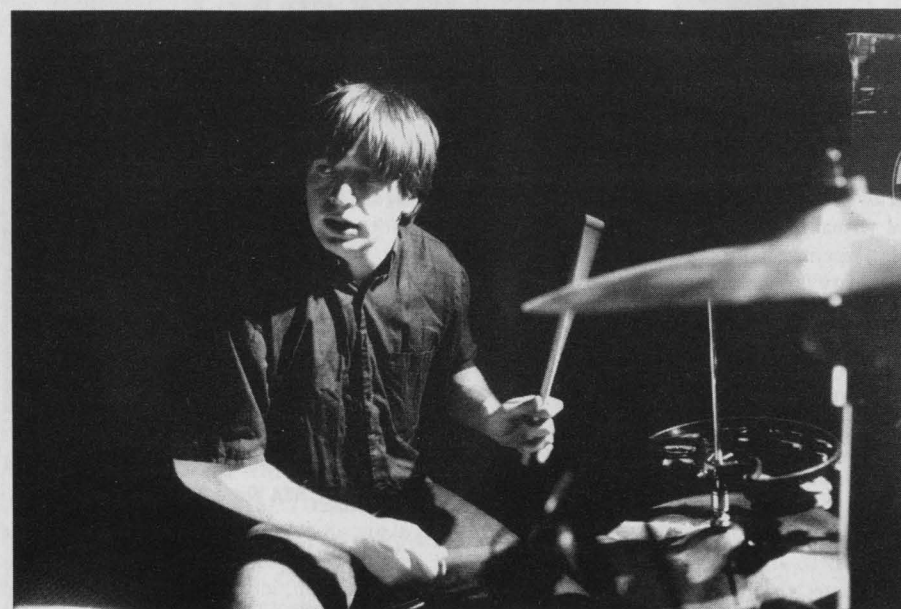
Born in New York City, at the dawn of the '80s, **Sonic Youth** were either the last fizzle of the post-no-wave impulse, or the first proponents of the guerrilla-guitar-art-architecture that was dubbed "noise rock" later in the decade. More importantly, Sonic Youth was the band that finally ripped the rug of underground heppiness out from beneath the feet of English hairboys, returning America and its bands to their rightful spot as global fashion dictators.

Sonic Youth's four members combined hepster knowledge culled from four separate corners of the bohemian globe. Bassist/guitarist Kim Gordon brought intense avant-art credentials, strange pop sensibilities, and a uniquely cracked reading of the California Girl mythos. Guitarist Lee Ranaldo brought unassailable technique and a gift for tongues osmotically recieved through submersion in the works of Kerouac, Ginsberg, Dylan, Mitchell, Young, et al. Guitarist Thurston Moore brought idiotic loads of cultural fandom and mania, a heavy sense of punk justice, and riff savvy as straight and dirty as his bangs. Drummer Steve Shelley (who became a permanent member in 1985) brought bonafide midwestern hard-core experience, fresh-scrubbed rhythm presence, and art-rock width potential. These four disparate tastes combined to produce a crazy cultural stew that was nearly as impossible to resist as it was to codify.

When they first emerged, they were seen as the "rock" extension of the massed-guitar-art of people like Remko Scha, Rhys Chatham, and Glenn Branca (with whom both Lee and Thurston had played). Later, they were lumped with the other loud New York guitar-based bands who played at the S.I.N. Club and the Pyramid: SWANS, Live Skull, Rat At Rat R, UT, etc. Later, they were hailed as leaders and sponsors of the American indie explosion of the late '80s. Bands like Nirvana, Dinosaur Jr., Pavement, Sebadoh, and tons more were birthed, nurtured, and freed under Sonic Youth's gaze. If they had never existed, the vistas of today's popular music would be infinitely bleaker.

Now, in 1997, Sonic Youth continue to evolve and arc in their own orbit even as some of the bands they inspired calcify and crumble into artistic dust. The band's incredible string of albums—13 full LPs in all—and the acommercial, non-linearity of artistic development that those albums represent, are a testament to the ultimate worth of following a spiritual muse instead of thinking about the next paycheck. While most bands have back catalogs that wither into nothingness, like rabbit turds in a forgotten corner of the nursery, Sonic Youth's previous works combine with their current ones to expose new aspects of a Euclidian whole. Their albums don't represent steps ahead so much as steps into an entirely different dimension.

—Byron Coley



Opposite: Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon. Above: Steve Shelley. Below: Lee Ranaldo. Photos by Stefano Giovannini.

Sonic Youth is currently busy recording material for a March 1998 release on DGC/Geffen. This as-yet-untitled album follows the critically acclaimed *Washing Machine*. The band has also recently released two EPs—SYR 1 and SYR 2—on their own SYR imprint. These are the first in an on-going EP series of experimental avant-rock music not unlike what the band will be performing at Lincoln Center.