

**Puluche Album Review Rubric ©**

**Artist: Soundgarden**

**Album Title: Superunknown (1994)-A&M**

**Criteria**

**Rating**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>4 - Exemplary</b>	<b>3 - Proficient</b>	<b>2 - Developing</b>	<b>1 - Underdeveloped</b>	
<b><u>Compositions</u></b>	Every song is quality and has a distinctive appeal of its own. Tracks have a perfect flow and continuity that enhance the album's overall appeal.	Many quality songs with some distinctive appeal. Tracks have a good flow and continuity that enhance the album's overall appeal.	Some quality songs with distinctive appeal but not sustained. Track flow and continuity have little effect on album's overall appeal.	Few to no quality songs lacking any distinctive appeal. Track flow and continuity have little/poor effect on album's overall appeal.	<b>20</b>
<b><u>Breaking Ground</u></b>	Has impressive elements of high creativity and is experimentally innovative. Developing own signature sound. Shows extreme growth and/or potential as a substantial and influential artist.	Features elements of creativity and uniqueness. Shows growth and/or potential as a developing and influential artist, but some stagnation as an established artist.	Has very few moments of creativity and uniqueness. Shows a little growth and/or some potential as a developing artist, but notable regression as an established artist.	Has no creativity and uniqueness. Shows no growth and/or little potential as a developing or established artist.	<b>20</b>
<b><u>Engagement</u></b>	Music has a transcending quality with numerous songs that grab the listener on respective emotional/social levels. Many songs have an addictive effect and memorable quality.	Music has transcending qualities with some songs that grab the listener on respective emotional/social levels. Some songs have an addictive effect and memorable quality.	Music has some transcending qualities with few songs that appeal on respective emotional/social levels, as well as having any addictive or memorable qualities.	Music has minimal transcending qualities and few to no songs that appeal on respective emotional/social levels. No positive memorable qualities - only negative.	<b>20</b>
<b><u>Lyrics</u></b>	Has a strong lyrical voice with multiple thought-provoking messages with clear and/or possible meanings and depth.	Has notable lyrical voice with some thought-provoking messages and/or possible meanings and depth.	Has limited lyrical voice with few-to-no thought-provoking messages, meanings and depth.	Has a weak lyrical voice with no thought-provoking messages or meanings and seriously lacks any depth.	<b>20</b>
<b><u>Production</u></b>	Masterful sound quality with noticeable studio techniques employed that demand headphone inquiry. Vision flawlessly executed. Overall packaging and artwork effectively compliments and enhances album enjoyment.	Very good sound quality with some noticeable studio techniques that demand headphone inquiry. Vision is acceptable. Overall packaging and artwork compliments album enjoyment.	Decent sound quality with few-to-no noticeable studio techniques employed. Vision is questionable. Overall packaging and artwork fails to compliment album.	Questionable sound quality with no noticeable studio techniques. Lacks vision. Overall packaging and artwork fails to compliment album.	<b>20</b>

<p><u>Comments</u></p>	<p>Words alone do not do <i>Superunknown</i> justice as this heavenly jackhammer of an album is in a league of its own. All an innocent onlooker can do is stare in awe as this multifaceted piece of music unfolds before them, evolving with ever listen.</p> <p>In this sprawling 70 minute masterpiece it is unbelievably easy to get lost in the darkness of Kim Thayil's Sabbath-esque riffs and as a result miss the subtler, more organic side of Soundgarden. Songs like the volatile "Outshined" and the tidal wave that is "Rusty Cage" aurally attack with no regret.</p> <p>However it is in their lyrics that the listener will find the melancholy, angst-ridden spirit of 90s grunge. Even the less guitar-driven songs on the album like "Black Hole Sun" and "Fell on Black Days" carry with them a burden that goes beyond the remarkable presentation. Every song is a raw nerve, full of a certain life-force that is only present when an artist truly throws everything they have at the canvas. It is this emotive quality that makes Soungarden more than just a "heavy-guitar" act.</p> <p>It is all about the cohesion between Cornell's voice and the instrumentals. In <i>Badmotorfinger</i> Cornell had the tendency to cut through the melody with his trademark growl. However in this record the lead singer finds himself flowing equally as smoothly as his band mates, hovering with them in a crystal clear production that is almost too polished for the subject matter it includes. For instance, the brooding "Mailman" presents the listener with a grim character introducing himself with "Hello don't you know me. / I'm the dirt beneath your feet" as the haunting guitars coil around him. Neither the voice nor the instrumentals stray away from this suicidal mood leaving the listener stuck in a timeframe with no payoff in sight. The song hisses, stomps and threatens its way until till the end, never allowing the listener to achieve any kind of release.</p> <p>It is unexpected storytelling at its best as Soundgarden's creation is riddled with painfully untrustworthy characters that constantly contradict themselves. Even the sunshine-laced "My Wave" finds a way to challenge its inherent hedonism with a conservatively-minded chorus. Cornell croons "Take, if you want a slice / If you want a piece / If it feels alright" but as soon as the chorus hits the hippie-minded tone abruptly changes to "Don't come over here / And piss on my gate / Save it just keep it / Off my wave."</p> <p>There is a similar darkness present in the apocalyptic "Limo Wreck" where the speaker continuously reminds the audience of an impending doom. "The Day I Tried To Live" continues the Soundgardian tradition of the paradox by infusing the speaker with the ability to truly "live" but making him flawed and utterly useless except as an example of how easy it is to lie to oneself.</p> <p>These musicians are not here to hold the listener's hand, they have fashioned an unsafe and impassioned environment specifically to loosen chains and convey emotional truth.</p> <p>Whether it is through the oddly addicting rhythms of "Spoonman" or the deliberate and sexy grind that is "4<sup>th</sup> of July," Soundgarden simply do not concern themselves with making a specific moral statement, but rather focus on just how far they can push and then push some more until something snaps.</p>	<p><b>100</b></p>
<p><u>Commendations</u></p>	<p>The labels of punk and metal were thrown around in the pre-<i>Superunknown</i> era. This album allowed Soundgarden to further advance their personality. The heavy emphasis on psychedelia is easily recognizable in gems like "Mailman" and "Head Down" however Cornell and band put a little something extra in the pot.</p> <p>There is also an extremely recognizable element of pop swimming through a large portion of the material. It is what</p>	

	made singles like “Black Hole Sun” and “The Day I Tried to Live” as infectious as they were eerie. The former actually won a Grammy and helped Soundgarden gain more mainstream appeal. This two-fold embrace of both psychedelia and pop further expanded the already boundary-breaking song-craft Soundgarden was known for. Overall the album sold nine million copies and provided the public proof that even a huge, robust sound can be auditory pleasure.
<u>Next Steps</u>	Soundgarden’s contribution to music did not stop after <i>Superunknown</i> , as they released two more albums to date - <i>Down on the Upside</i> (1996) and <i>King Animal</i> (2012). Unfortunately Soundgarden split up in 1997 after embarking on a worldwide tour with Matt Cameron claiming that the band was “eaten up by the business.” However, by the power of the rock gods or just old friends missing each other, Soundgarden reunited to create <i>King Animal</i> . Despite a lacking reception, the sound is matured and far more subtle than any previous material, plus there is an inescapable sense of chemistry present throughout. It is as if the band never truly split up. It is a confident, introspective gift that allowed Soundgarden to continue burning immense black holes through genres and expectations.
<u>Reviewer</u>	Teodor Nihtianov <span style="float: right;">IRC: Hilari Barton</span>