

PEARL JAM PULLS OFF A LOUD ONE AT THE TOWN PUMP IN VANCOUVER

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I'd been warned by someone who caught Pearl Jam's sound check at the Town Pump last Thursday afternoon (September 26) that the Seattle band was extremely loud. My second clue, upon entering the busy club around midnight, was the abundance of black leather and tattoos among the beer-guzzling patrons. These weren't your typical new-age followers. And the blonde lady with the sign of the Antichrist tattooed on her temple wasn't there to see Peter, Paul & Mary.

My hearing-safety concerns were justified when the band hit the stage and launched into "Once", the raunchy opening track from its debut album, *Ten*. Drummer Dave Krusen's cymbal smashes were shrill enough to kill small rodents, and I kept my distance, leaning against a wall at the far end of the bar. Then one of the show's promoters came up and remarked that a body can't really review a concert from that far away. So instead of telling him where he could review it from, I risked a closer look.

By this time the technicians had worked out most of the painfully loud bugs, and the band sounded fine from my new vantage point, which also afforded an excellent view of singer Eddie Vedder's spontaneous antics. During one of *Ten*'s best tunes, "Alive", he hoisted himself up on the ledge that runs behind the stage and dangled precariously from the light fixtures over Krusen's drum kit before leaping safely down. I was thankful he's a good jumper, or he might have had to write a tune called "Alive...With a Cymbal Stand Up My Butt".

Vedder—who made the bright move of trading in his U2 t-shirt for a Pigface one part-way through the set—led Pearl Jam through a thrilling set of alternative-flavoured hard-rock tunes that ended with a severe version of the Beatles' "I've Got a Feeling". From the sound of things, this act—which features two former members of the ill-fated Mother Love Bone—has what it takes to follow fellow Seattlers Alice in Chains right up the charts...and maybe even whip right past 'em!