

**PEARL JAM,
ELEVEN**

**Peabody's Down Under
April 2**

"I hope you made more friends than enemies tonight — in this lovely pit of ours," said Pearl Jam's lead vocalist and introspective lyricist Eddie Vedder.

It was an appropriate goodbye to the pumped-up crowd at Peabody's Down Under — a lot of concern mixed with a little sarcasm Vedder had been expressing interest in the welfare of the audience all night. Only on one occasion, his composure was shattered when someone dissed his microphone, and he shouted he was tired of seeing people hurt. It was difficult to tell if he was addressing the security personnel or the masses.

A kind of gothic instrumental preceded Pearl Jam's entrance. I expected them to come on cocked and loaded, but, considering the state of the audience, hanging delicately between restlessness and irritability, they came on subdued and calm.

Between songs, Vedder would improvise lyrically, singing lines such as *I don't wanna be no fool*, over and over again. I got the distinct impression that he was spontaneously giving birth to a hypnotic lullaby aimed at soothing everyone. At one point, as people were being pulled up onto the stage from the pit, Vedder said, "We're just rescuing people up here — I always did feel more like a life-guard than a singer anyway."

By the second song, "Once," they were on a consolidated roll. Although the stage seemed crowded, the five-member band — Vedder, Stone Gossard (guitar), Jeff Ament (bass), Mike McCread (guitar) and Dave Abruzzes (drummer) — looked stressed. And in spite of the excessive behavior on the part of the crowd, they sounded great. It's a wonder how they kept it together when the possi-

bility of a flailing body being tossed up onto the stage loomed ever so closely.

"Watch your heads, man," Vedder said as he splashed the mob with water and asked, "Is everybody OK?" He joked that he was partially to blame for the warmth in the room because he had asked the club to turn up the heat. In keeping with that subject, he began to croon, "What's Cleveland like in the summertime?" Gossard followed his lead and played along briefly, but the jam was interrupted by the band's most popular song, "Alive."

The set went on with the inspired versions of "Black," "Deep," "King Jeremy" and "Why Go." The only cover song on the program was Neil Young's "Rockin' In The Free World." During "Porch," Vedder jumped up on someone's shoulders and clutched onto some ceiling supports. He swung out over the pit and gracefully dropped into a swarm of hands. The people passed him gingerly back to the stage, and he continued with the song.

After a brief intermission, Pearl Jam came back on for one encore of "Garden."

Pearl Jam is not for everyone. They don't have a stage show. They aren't particularly pretty. They don't wear flashy clothes, and they never patronized the audience with any condescending rock and roll, simple-minded jive.

Playing selections from their debut album, *AWAKE IN A DREAM*, Eleven opened the evening and was very well-received by the audience. Their almost-*ABBEY ROAD* sound was a kind of "Why Don't We Do It In The Road" feel with Faith No More groove. Jack Irons on drums, Natasha on keyboards and bass and Big Al ("The Kids' Pal") on guitar showcased their album well, highlighting their single, "Break the Spell."

Susan Fenske