

Pearl Jam a smash hit at SUB concert

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Last night more than one-thousand people crowded into UMass Amherst's largest sauna to perspire to Pearl Jam.

Although it was probably not the intention of fans to leave the concert reeking of sweat and looking prunish, there was no sanctuary from the heat of the S.U.B.

Pearl Jam opened mildly enough with "Wash," a tune unfamiliar to those without knowledge of their three-song *Alive* EP. "Wash" tested the crowd's patience for enduring slower tunes. The crowd had none. As soon as "Once," began the waiting was over and the quest for oxygen began. The band started jamming, the throng began slamming and all the cramming left no air.

Lead vocalist Eddie Vedder propelled the show by penetrating our minds with his irresistible apocalyptic croak and hypnotizing us with the pale glare of his translucent eyes. Before "Alive," Vedder peered into the eyes of his moshing audience and insisted that they stop launching people over their heads. He quipped, "I don't want anybody to die, maybe it's just that I give a fuck."

Not too many others did. "Alive," the shivering tale of sexual abuse, spurred the crowd to become violent enough to injure one another. As I was singing the song's chorus, a swift blow to my upper lip arrested my vocal work for the evening. Thank you, kind mosher!

I'm starting to believe that people go to these pulsating shows solely to wreak havoc on the audience. To those of you who put Pearl Jam on your "great bands to mosh to" list, congratulations, they deserve to be on it. They also deserve you as a fan. But seriously, your crowd diving is a serious detraction. Try watching the show, you might actually enjoy it.

Those who were adept or athletically skilled enough to evade kamakaze students witnessed the relentless musical attack of Pearl Jam. The guitar rave-up "Even Flow," had the audience running for cotton as the band turned their amps up to eleven. The heartfelt loudness of "Why Go" compelled the audience to dig the crunchy rhythm guitar playing of Stone Goddard and the controlled chaos of Mike McCready's solo.

"Black" sheltered fans from flying human objects. The gorgeous ballad, perhaps the most moving moment on the album *Ten*, rendered the crowd stagnant as they became emotionally fulfilled.

"Black," amongst the pounding of tunes like "Jeremy," "Porch," and "Deep," was a watershed moment during the concert.

A great many came to hear "Alive." To those of you who came for the one song and didn't enjoy the rest, I hope you suffered every second that "Alive" wasn't playing. Damn good show!