

# FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BAND MEMBERS! WHERE AND WHEN PEARL JAM JELLED

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**S**oundgarden, Queensryche, Nirvana, Pearl Jam — what do these bands have in common? Buzz bands? Renegades? Critical faves? Well, yes—all of the above. These groups have virtually played by their own rules and in doing so have seemingly defied the odds to become commercial successes— somehow managing to please critics in the process.

That's a pretty good feat. With Queensryche being somewhat of an exception (since their sound is more elaborate, less punk-influenced) these bands constitute the leading edge of a new wave of rockers who mean what they say, in a way that manages to be unique in an industry that doesn't usually encourage experimentation or deviation from the norm.

The other common factor among these bands could help explain their adventuresome pioneering spirit. They all hail from the newly legendary "Seattle-scene" which is turning out intense, leading edge musical groups with alarming regularity.

Probably the "newest kid" in the bunch mentioned is Pearl Jam. Their rise to popularity has been both quick and complex. Pay attention. Bass player Jeff Ament and guitarist Stone Gossard first played together in Green River, releasing three Sub-Pop albums (Seattle's indie label) that were at the core of what their bio refers to as "the post-punk Northwest rock scene."

When Green River broke up, Ament and Gossard moved on to another Seattle band, Mother Love Bone. The much heralded major label debut of this influential group hit the streets almost simultaneously with the death of the group's lead singer, Andrew Wood. Short lived as the group's tenure was, they still managed to make a distinct impression, especially with critics.

A tribute album in Wood's memory was next. This collaborative effort called *Temple of the Dog* included Ament and Gossard along with Soundgarden's Chris Cornell and Matt Cameron, plus soon-to-be Pearl Jam member Mike McCready.

Still keeping up? After *Temple of the Dog*, Ament and Gossard auditioned players and put together a new band, including Mike McCready on guitar and Dave Krusen on drums. The last addition to the band was lead singer/surfer Eddie Vedder, who they managed to get out of the water long enough to audition and add to their roster. Voila,



**Pearl Jam:**  
(l-r) Stone Gossard, Jeff Ament, Mike McCready, Eddie Vedder, Dave Krusen

Pearl Jam was born. Almost instantly they created a buzz. The band recorded a three-song promotional sampler first, which included the songs "Alive" (the one you've heard on the radio) and "Wash" along with a cover of the Beatles' "I've Got a Feeling."

Their debut album *Ten* followed with 11 tracks including "Alive," "Even Flow," "Once," and "Release."

Their first live dates were last year with another Seattle standout, Alice In Chains. For these dates, Pearl Jam played under the name Mookie Blaylock—a basketball player the band felt was an underdog. The fact that the band discovered Blaylock's basketball card in their cassette case probably also contributed to the inspiration to use the name.

Like several other Seattle-based bands, including Nirvana (who seems to have less than great things to say about their Northwest coast cohorts), Pearl Jam has managed to go from local notoriety to national radio overkill quite quickly. Their brooding, intense sound seems to draw fans as much as their raw emotional personality. Part punk, part metal, forgetting trying to classify or pigeon-hole Pearl Jam. But, there's an undeniable edge to this band that seems to draw their audience to them.

## Follow For Now

Another band that is defying the norms of rock 'n' roll is Follow For Now. This band hails from Atlanta, arguably as far from Seattle as you can get. If that wasn't enough, the five-piece ensemble boasts an undeniable distinction. Part of yet another trend, Follow For Now is one of a handful of black rock groups shaking up the white boy's scene and tearing down race related musical expectations.

Called a cross between Fishbone and Living Color because of their "punkish anti-



**Follow For Now:**  
(l-r) Chris Tinsley, Enrique Fields, Jamie Turner (top), David Ryan-Harris

establishment lyrics." Follow For Now also brings to mind the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone—even Black Sabbath—in a sort of psychedelic meets funk meets progressive/heavy rock hybrid.

Guitarist Chris Tinsley, interviewed before their last Charlotte performance (at the Milestone) relates that the mix of moods has a lot to do with influences. "I am a big, big jazz fan," he explained. "I was weaned on it."

Tinsley, who began playing guitar when he was 10 years old, took those jazz roots and headed straight into "the '70s stuff—Van Halen," he continued. "I was into Rush for a long time, but then I also like music that's funky, like Parliament. I was into all of it."

Such a broad mix creates confusion when trying to classify the music of Follow For Now and that's fine with Tinsley. "We play rock," he states simply. "We are a rock and roll band with a little of everything—heavy

metal, ballads, straight ahead and the blues.

Live, the band aptly demonstrates this mix. Calling the show "aggressive," he stated reassuringly, "There are peaks and valleys in the show. It's not all done in one gear. It's very intense and that spreads. People don't just watch, they're in it with us, often on stage and dancing with us."

"Definitely a fun time for all," Tinsley laughs.

Then on a more serious musical philosophy note, he added, "We've found popularity in being different. People are tired of being spoon fed what they are 'supposed' to listen to and like. They're sick of it. I'm sick of it and insulted. People appreciate things that are different so we look for it. We don't mind going out on a limb for the music."

Pearl Jam embarked on a headlining club tour late last year and will make a stop in Charlotte on this Wednesday, April 15, at 13-13. Follow For Now will open. The show reportedly sold out in three days.