

# Pearl Jam, Doughboys in rock meltdown

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GAZETTE ROCK CRITIC

"Pretty hot, ain't it? Jesus," says Eddie Vedder, stating the murderously obvious.

"We're all in it together."

The obviously poignant.

It crested at 115 degrees in the Verdun Crematorium last night, rock'n'roll become a brute activity, rock'n'roll become as bonding as skin to T-shirt.

Onstage, Pearl Jam and Montreal's Doughboys were throwing themselves head-first into a sweat vat of 5,000 fans, who bitched and moaned about the wilting heat and threw themselves right back at the stage with a vigor that defied animal reason. Weaker bands might have thrown in a wringing-wet towel, but instead they wrung out twin victories, for different reasons.

## A groove band

In some quarters, Pearl Jam is the betrayal band, riding the tattered Seattle grunge (aiee!) coattails to success with a sound the average suburban-rock mall rat can trace back to his '70s albums. Whatever. To give that opinion credence is to render all such categorizing terms as solid as wet Kleenex. This is a groove band with rock's most charismatic autistic this side of Cobain, and one which has tapped into the displaced kid in everyone. Save the punk elitism for someone else.

Pearl Jam opened under diffuse green-blue light, fitting the opened songs, the fade-in, fade-outs of almost everything they play. Almost immediately, there was the potential for trouble, as fans were asked to step back from the stage barricade for fear somebody would faint and have the life squeezed out of them.

Vedder hung back as security opened hoses on the gamers. Looking like a Generation X derelict in shabby street clothes, he moved to



GAZETTE, DAVE SIDAWAY

Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder turns up heat at Verdun Auditorium last night.

## REVIEW

the mike and threw himself all over it as the band cranked Why Go.

Pearl Jam is touring with a 2-year-old debut and a sophomore album that has yet to be released. Nevertheless, the crowd picked up the chorus chant, challenging Vedder's deep, powerful vocal for space in the humidity.

## Energy in spurts

The energy doubled for Jeremy, tripled for Even Flow, as expected. The band's energy came in bursts, but the crowd stayed with them through a good seven or eight new songs they had never heard before. One, Daughter, was a northwest

folk song. The rest were charging and streamlined, promising good things for the new album. "I'm still alive," sang Vedder, again resorting to the murderously obvious.

The Doughboys faced down the heat even more resolutely, refusing to tone down the leaping intensity of their club sets. Fix Me was a white roar. Neighborhood Villain a dark suburban drama in the heart of Verdun. Deep End had fans pogoing and bodysurfing, and John Kastner and Jon Cummins summed up the night just as it was beginning.

"Watch me mellllllt!"

Two tough sets in Montreal's stinking-arpit venue. Standing ovations all round, for anyone still standing.