

# Six-hour marathon of rock made you feel Young again



WARD PERRIN/Vancouver Sun

NEIL YOUNG: non-stop rock

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**N**EIL YOUNG HAS dropped so many surprises on his audience over the past quarter century, it's getting kind of hard to be surprised anymore.

Nevertheless, by the time the 47-year-old singer/songwriter left B.C. Place Saturday night, many of the 17,000 in attendance were wishing they'd worn Depends.

It was, bar none, the best band and best set Young has ever hit the highway with — and he has hit the highway with some greats. While the idea of hiring Stax/Volt soul legends Booker T. and the MGs seemed a bit suspect at first (oh, Lord, not that *Blues Notes* shtick again), it proved the ideal combination.

Booker T. Jones' swelling B-3 organ runs, Steve Cropper's tasteful guitar fills and Duck Dunn's bedrock bass lines provided ample ballast for Young's feedback-laden guitar screeds and impassioned vocal whine. Toss in Jim Keltner's metronomic drumming and the backing vocals of Candy Stocking and Young's sister Astrid and you had the biggest, most satisfying sound Young has achieved in a live setting.

For more than two hours, he pulled out pret-

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**NEIL YOUNG  
& BOOKER T. AND THE MGs**  
with **PEARL JAM**  
and **BLIND MELON**

B.C. Place, Sept. 4

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ty much everything die-hards would want to hear short of giving a six-hour show (which it was anyway, thanks to Pearl Jam and Blind Melon, but we'll get to that later).

If you weren't there, eat your heart out, 'cause this is how it went: *Mr. Soul*, *The Loner*, *Southern Man*, *Helpless*, *Like A Hurricane*, *Rockin' in the Free World* (at which point the heavens dropped), *Love to Burn*, *Only Love Can Break Your Heart* (gorgeous Booker T. solo), *Harvest Moon*, *Needle and the Damage Done*, *Heart of Gold* (okay, crank it up, again), *Powderfinger*, (a glorious 15 minutes of) *Down by the River* and a staggering encore of the Otis Redding/MGs' hit (*Sittin' on*) *The Dock of the Bay* and Dylan's *All Along the Watchtower*.

No other contemporary artist (excepting, of course, Dylan, who's still God, even if he's a bit wacko-cracko these days) could have pulled

it off.

Now for the rest of the marathon.

Judging by the number of hanky-heads, nose rings, plaid shirts and King Tut beards, a lot of people were there to see Pearl Jam. One of the highlights of their set was watching the blue-shirted, big-boned security guards play "drop-sy" with the O.D. casualties being carried from the stadium.

One poor girl thought she was just having a bad trip until she was bounced head-first off the concrete floor.

As for Pearl Jam, well, these lads were signed in the glut of the now-laughable Seattle Sound and, frankly, their debut album, *Ten*, sounds good but has few memorable songs. Luckily, they're insanely energetic and that attribute, combined with half-a-dozen-or-so familiar tunes, carried them through the hour-and-a-quarter set.

The new songs are better than the old ones and vocalist Eddie Vedder has learned that everytime you say the F-word through a microphone, people go berserk.

Blind Melon sound like the thoroughly detestable Spin Doctors and prove that if Grateful Dead fans are Deadheads, then Blind Melon fans must be Melonheads.