

# Pearl Jam delivers raw, angry sound

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By Troy Moon  
News Journal

It wasn't how you expected Pearl Jam's concert at the Pensacola Civic Center to begin Wednesday night. But it was fitting.

Eddie Vedder appeared on stage alone except for a guitar, and launched into a heart-felt, raw acoustic version of Tom Petty's "Won't Back Down" — and "we'll stand our ground," he sang over and over until the final chords drifted off. A second later he whispered to the sold-out crowd of 7,683, "you know why we're here."

And the reason was two-fold. The outspoken band spoke frequently during the show about "the right to choice," and doubtless, one of the reasons Pearl Jam graced Pensacola with a concert was to show its support for the abortion rights movement. The concert was a benefit for the Feminist Majority's Rock For Choice Program.

The second reason? To attack the crowd with more than 75 minutes — including two lengthy encores — of some of the most intense, passionate and blistering guitar rock being made today.

Shortly after the Petty number, the band bit into "Animal" off Pearl Jam's latest album, "Vs.," their successful follow-up to the equally successful debut "Ten."

"One, two, three, four, five against one," Vedder chanted before the band's crunchy guitar duo of Mike McCready and Stone Gossard unleashed their gloriously horrifying "wah-wah" attack on

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the crowd. Filled with numbing distortion, the band played like the song title ("Animal") suggests, as Vedder raged against the world's violence.

Intentional feedback also turned the next two songs, "Even Flow" and "Glorified G," grungier than their album versions — a plus — though Vedder's especially potent growling vocals were sometimes muddled in a sloppy mix.

Still, considering the circumstances surrounding the concert, "Glorified G," with its tight, funk intro, was one of the show's many highlights as Vedder wailed about the false power that guns bring to many. "Always keep it loaded," Vedder sang, hunched over his microphone like a possessed madman, the sarcasm in his husky growl only overwhelmed by his venom.

The current radio hit "Don't Call Me Daughter" came shortly after, with Vedder showing a remarkably restrained vocal style, as McCready, Gossard and bassist Jeff Ament gathered in a circle to create a remarkable cacophony of white noise that showcased Vedder's range and restraint even further.

"Jeremy," the single from "Ten" which jettied Pearl Jam into prominence, was received no more enthusiastically than any other song — but make no mistake, the moshing, crowd-surfing audience responded enthusiastically to them all.

Troy Moon reviews music performances for the News Journal.

## Unforgettable moshing

By Heather Young

If you've never been to a Pearl Jam show, I don't think I could ever describe it to you. Rock for Choice put on one of the best shows of all time.

Follow for Now started the concert out. The moshing was the worst I've ever experienced and people were being pulled out of the crowd one by one. The whole time, I was praying I wouldn't suffocate.

Opening band L7 played second, L7 is one of the most influential women bands of the '90s. Eddie Vedder, Pearl Jam's singer, was sitting behind one of the amps while L7 was playing, just admiring and enjoying the music. Some lucky fans even saw a rare smile on

his lips.

When Pearl Jam finally took the stage, the crowd was in a frenzy. Vedder played a solo version of Tom Petty's "Won't Back Down." The crowd went absolutely wild.

Throughout the whole Pearl Jam show, the crowd was screaming endlessly. The physical energy that was in the room was overpowering. A few people passed out.

With Vedder's screaming, powerful voice, Stone Gossard and Mike McCready's guitars, Jeff Ament's bass, and Dave Abbruzzese's drums, the Rock for Choice Benefit show is one that Pensacola and the Civic Center are not likely to forget.