



■ From left, Stone Gossard, Eddie Vedder and Mike McCready.

# Thrilled Missoula crowd gives Pearl Jam send-off

## Concert review

### Pearl Jam

Wednesday, Feb. 8, Harry Adams Fieldhouse, University of Montana, Missoula

By Tom Lutey  
Special to IN Life

Seattle rockers Pearl Jam took to the stage in Missoula Wednesday for their last North American performance before heading to the Far East to tour.

Led by frontman Eddie Vedder, the band blazed through its repertoire before a crowd of 7,000 — the venue sold out in less than a day.

Forty-five minutes and 11 songs into the show, Vedder stopped to catch his breath and answer the question bugging Pearl Jam fans all over the country: Why Missoula?

"This is (Jeff) Ament's hometown," Vedder said, pointing to the band's bassist. "I guess he had some old enemies he wanted to impress."

Enemies aside, Ament's friends benefited from the Seattle rocker's visit. Tim Bierman, one of Ament's University of Montana college buds, opened the show with Missoula band Sangri-la Speedway, the band's third live performance ever.

The Missoula gig also marked the debut of new Pearl Jam member Jack Irons, the original drummer for the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Irons, who joined Pearl Jam after they cut "Vitalogy," pounded the drum skins with rhythmic fury during the band's hour-and-40-minute set. Pearl Jam performed three encores for a crowd that refused to go home. After the first curtain call, Vedder dropped his patented rock-and-roll angst, wandering onto the stage alone and leading the crowd in a round of Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" to celebrate what would have been the reggae star's 50th birthday earlier this week.

Vedder and the rest of the band then fired up for a bump-and-grind version of Pete Townshend's "Let My Love Open the Door."