

Awful acoustics can't muffle Pearl Jam's message to fans

Seattle band bonds with Coliseum audience at overdue concert

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MUSIC REVIEW

PEARL JAM

With The Ramones.
Veterans Memorial Coliseum,
Wednesday.

The general-admission crowd of 14,000 at Pearl Jam's show Wednesday turned Veterans Memorial Coliseum into a cathedral for the cult of Eddie Vedder.

The Seattle quintet's lead singer owned the audience from the moment he rode a bicycle onto the stage till the time he pledged, "See you next year," at the end of the band's encores.

That promise, after Pearl Jam's extended vacation due to its feud with Ticketmaster, pleased the crowd as much as the 23 tunes that preceded it.

The group pounded through five tunes — including *Go*, *Animal* and *Spin the Black Circle* — before Vedder spoke to the multitude.

"Thank you for changing your plans for us," he said. The crowd roared at the reference to the show's being rescheduled from a date in June.

The audience found it well worth the wait, for the band played a set full of surprises — leaving out such sure-fire crowd pleasers as *Jeremy* while including relative obscurities, such as *Yellow Ledbetter*.

However, the jet-engine wash of

sound, abetted by the miserable acoustics, made mush of every song.

That didn't matter to a crowd primed to body-surf, though. Fans were there to breathe the same air as the group — to sing along and to yell out as Vedder did, "I just want to scream, 'Hello!'"

The high points included Vedder's nearly maniacal venom spew on *Not for You* and his more affirmative and generous reading of *Alive*.

Where Pearl Jam extended most of its songs, The Ramones' opening act depended on a rapid-fire stream of rapid-fire songs.

Such tunes as *Rockaway Beach*, *I Wanna Be Sedated* and even *Pet Semetary* were short, tight, punchy and irresistible.