

# PEARL JAM KEEPS ITS PROMISE, ELECTRIFIES FORGIVING UTAH FANS

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Salt Lake City's love affair with Pearl Jam is on again.

After what seemed like years (it was actually months) since the infamous Wolf Mountain rain-out, Pearl Jam decided to stick with its promise of returning and playing longer. A long and welcome show at the Delta Center Wednesday night began a two-day Jamfest that will undoubtedly have concert-goers talking about it for years. After a scathing hit-and-miss set by Seattle's pop-punk band Fastbacks, the Pearl Jam show started for real as vocalist Eddie Vedder, bassist Jeff Ament, drummer Jack Irons and guitarists Stone Gossard and Mike McCready pounded out the staccato notes to the "Vs." starting cut, "Go."

By the looks of the screaming fans, the band who bagged the Ticketmaster feud and left its audience wet and hanging was forgiven.

Without a word the band slipped into "Animal," from the same album, as the mixed audience of about 9,000 bounced along and sang the chorus. A semi-new song "Last Exit" from the band's most recent album "Vitalogy" came right before the grinding punky single "Spin the Black Circle."

Vedder delivered most of the lyrics while hanging on the microphone stand with his cool, trademark standing hunch, bringing shreds of a modern-day Jim Morrison to mind. And no matter what the man did - whether it was shake his head, take a sip of liquid refreshment or jump around - the crowd screamed its approval with boisterous pleasure.

Gossard and McCready took turns shooting solos at each other and vaulted around the stage while Ament and Irons kept sometimes frantic, yet blasting rhythms.

The sound on the floor was clear and tight. The band, keeping true to its albums and fans, created a controlled loose feeling that left room for improvisation and jamming.

A formidable wooden chandelier stabbed with what appeared to be lighted daggers hung above the stage as colored lights and shadows splashed the burlap backdrop during "Corduroy" and "Not for You" from "Vitalogy" and "Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town" from "Vs."

"I believe we've met before," Vedder said to the squealing crowd. "We came back to make good on our promise to play twice as long."

(Actually the "twice as long" part is tonight's show, because of the Delta Center curfew.)

During some points of the concert, the crowd sang so loud that even Vedder's well-carried voice became temporarily blurred, but that didn't stop the band from playing well and hard.

"Daughter," the fan-pleasing cut from "Vs." that featured Ament on an acoustic double-bass fiddle, settled the audience down for a while. Flickering lighters dotted the arena as if Pearl Jam had somehow morphed into a power-ballad belting rock band such as Def Lep-pard.

The doodling bass huffed new life into "Rearviewmirror" which featured an extended jam of harmonious, psychedelic guitar jangles.

The band also served aged goodies such as the wa-wa guitar pedal of "Even Flow" and the somewhat majestic and intense "Alive" from "Ten." During "Alive" stage lights turned and lit up the arena giving the band full view of the audience. Vedder seemingly looked into more than 18,000 eyes and serenaded them before a red, yellow and orange image of the sun burst across the backdrop.

Other fine tunes included the strobelight frenzy of "Blood," "Sick and Tired" and the solitary feel of the acoustic hit "Bet-ter-man."

Overall the night felt right, and with exception of a feedback spinning, drawn-out encore, the band kept things on the move. And if the audience was angry with the band at first for having to cancel the two performances earlier this year, it didn't show.

"Thanks for waiting," Vedder said at the end of the night. With that, the problems with Ticket-master, sickness and other messes were put in the past.