

Pearl Jam Treats S.L. to Grunge Angst

By Lori Butters
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Pearl Jam settled the score.

Four months after a freezing rainstorm forced the grunge band to abandon its fans on a Wolf Mountain hillside, Eddie Vedder and Co. made good on their promise to return to Utah. And this time, they actually played.

Wednesday's concert, the first of two angst-filled nights at the Delta Center in Salt Lake City, saw a band barely aware of the hurricane hype that accompanies its musical efforts.

At times, the band played as if possessed, growling and moaning with the **dramatics of a rock opera**. Mostly, the members were mildly indifferent. However, they became more audience-friendly as the night wore on.

Their more self-absorbed moments worked to the band's benefit. If lead singer Vedder could mentally remove himself from the expansive basketball arena, then fans with the patience to concentrate on the introspective lyrics could feel his emotion.

Vedder's initial greeting was met with tempered boos. The fans, expecting to enjoy a "twice

as long" concert, were disappointed when Vedder said he would divide the promised time between the two nights.

An earthen-toned candelabrum hung overhead, giving the stage set a Gothic aura that matched Vedder's low-ranging, often-haunting vocals.

"Spin the Black Circle" and "Even Flow" had the band in true metal form. Vedder topped the latter with a head-quaking pose.

Sometimes he would pick up a guitar and join the other band members in elongated jams — a la the Grateful Dead.

The overwhelmingly male, teen-age audience, many of whom

were wearing their T-shirts from last June's cancellation, stood through the entire show. Mosh pits of bare-chested youths broke out between the rows.

Sing-along favorites, "Alive" and "Black," built into a flashing white-light seizure that ended with Vedder crashing the mike stand into the drums and stage. But that wasn't the end. Vedder returned, throwing cigarette packages into the crowd.

No doubt, the cigs were thrown in hopes of enticing fans back for a second night. Meanwhile, rumors abound of Pearl Jam sightings and how the band will spend its time between concerts.