

PEARL JAMS ON HEALTHY NOTE

Eddie Vedder makes up for June performance canceled by stomach flu

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SAN JOSE — Honoring their promise to make up a show which was cut short by singer Eddie Vedder's stomach flu, Pearl Jam returned to the Bay Area Saturday with a sold-out concert at San Jose's Spartan Stadium.

With band members all apparently in fine health, the group rocked through songs from all three of their albums, setting the 35,000 fans bouncing from the first beat. Before the opening act took the stage, Vedder came out with a guitar to perform one song to open the show. Before he began, he announced to a cheery audience, "I just want to say my stomach feels great."

Vedder was referring to his condition at the band's June 24 concert at Golden Gate Park Polo Field when Young rescued them from a sticky situation. He took over the stage after Vedder had to bow out of the concert following an early morning trip to a hospital emergency room.

Playing songs first from "Mirror Ball" and then from his own solo efforts, Young did his best on that hot June afternoon to prevent a total fiasco. Still, most fans left feeling slighted, having eagerly anticipated a performance from rock's current Big Guy. On this Saturday, Young was nowhere to be seen.

Opening precisely at 4:30 p.m., Pearl Jam moved briskly into "Evenflow" from the band's debut album "Ten." With the intensity of their performance, the group seemed to be making a public musical apology to their fans for the June 24 show. Those with ticket stubs from the earlier concert were given priority for Saturday's long-awaited make-up performance.

Led by guitarists Stone Gossard and Mike McCready, the band roared through their numbers. Bassist Jeff Ament and new drummer Jack Irons set down a monstrous beat, over which Gossard and McCready traded licks and Vedder added his soaring and hypnotic vocal stylings.

It is Vedder, who approaches his songs as though they were personal letters to each individual member of his audience, who separates Pearl Jam from every other band currently performing. He brings life to the lyrics he writes for the group's moving and powerful songs and launches himself completely into every performance in a manner that is nothing short of astounding.

During his performance of "Black," he was particularly impressive, pouring his soul into the song as though this were the one defining performance for all time. He followed "Black" with "Alive," a moving combination about 20 songs into the 2½-hour, more than two dozen song performance. The band hit several high points with Saturday's show, among them "Jeremy" and a medley of "Daughter" and "Young Man Blues." It's hard to imagine Vedder giving so much of himself in show after show.

Vedder at one point surveyed the crowd and said, "So these are all the people I would have seen if I could have lifted my head up in San Francisco." Following Vedder's abrupt departure from the Polo Field stage in June, the band canceled the remaining eight cities of an 11-city summer tour. The tour had already been plagued by the group's ongoing battle against what they see as the monopoly of the Ticketmaster agency.

Trying to hold down service charges for their fans, Pearl Jam relied on the Philadelphia-based ETM ticket agency, whose service charge was less than \$3 per \$20 ticket, as compared with up to \$6 charges by Ticketmaster. Unfortunately for the band, they soon found themselves effectively frozen out of many larger venues, which had exclusive arrangements with Ticketmaster.

For fans like John Tobias and Susan Parker, the group's struggles were less important than the group's mere presence. Having survived the June 24 concert with less than fond memories, they were only too happy to be getting a second chance to see the band.

"We went to a Pearl Jam concert and it turned into a Neil Young concert," Tobias, 17, remembered unhappily. "And it

sucked."

"He played repetitive songs over and over," Parker added. "I slept for half an hour right in the middle of his set."

"They'll make up for it today," promised Tobias, "unless they are butt-wipes, which I don't think they are." On Saturday, Pearl Jam more than made up for their midsummer fiasco, with everyone leaving happy and satisfied.



Singer Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam captivated the crowd at a concert Saturday at San Jose's Spartan Stadium.

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