

# Pearl Jam whips fans into frenzy

By **BOB KEYES**

Argus Leader Staff

**RAPID CITY** - With an intense summer storm rolling through the hills outside, Eddie Vedder and Pearl Jam made certain the pressure stayed high indoors at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

"Good evening. Welcome to the shelter from the storm," Vedder told the crowd, as they scurried in from the rain to catch a torrent of another kind.

In town for a Wednesday concert, the Seattle rock band whipped 10,000 fans from across the country into a thundering frenzy of human hail. They threw themselves into a whirlwind - moshing, dancing and flying through the air to the grind of Pearl Jam's exhilarating beat.

If the band maintains this performance plateau - a better ques-

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## CONCERT REVIEW

tion is whether fans can keep it up night after night - Pearl Jam will have proven itself the defining rock act of the '90s. The band has outlasted all the labels from grunge to alternative and now may claim to simply being the rock band of a generation.

With the roaring approval of a college-age crowd, Pearl Jam made a case for that on Wednesday. Leaning heavily toward material from the new "Yield" CD, the band opened with a crunching rip-through of "Do the Evolution." The show's standout number - a song where the band relied on melody and taste rather than sheer force - was the elegant "Wishlist," also from "Yield."

Old tunes that brought the biggest crowd reactions were predictable and appealing: a churling "Even Flow" and the anthem "Alive."

At no time was the band's growth from a garage group of rock 'n' roll kids into a finely tuned unit more obvious than on "Alive." What once sounded like a cliché now comes off as a bold sonic statement, thanks to guitarist Mike McCready's rebellious licks. As much as anyone, he learned the most from Neil Young's tutelage - play loud and let it rip.

A mix between Jim Morrison's possessed intensity and David Bowie's garrulous punk demeanor, Vedder showed both his compassionate and humorous

**Pearl Jam / See 4B**



Associated Press

**Eddie Vedder belts out a song before a packed crowd Wednesday at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City.**

# Pearl Jam: Fans come back

Continued from 1B

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sides. At one point, he halted the show so paramedics could attend to a mosh-pit girl who had fallen rather hard over the stage-front barrier. Later, he ragged on Mount Rushmore.

"It's a nice kind of a little rock carving, if you're into that patriotic thing," he said, then praising Crazy Horse Mountain as "more interesting."

As a vocalist, Vedder has evolved from a whiny punk into a superstar with a captivating stage presence. He can sing well enough, but he distinguishes himself by conveying emotion. Alternating between a shrill, bird-like quiver and a controlled passionate roar, Vedder's vocals are now the centerpiece of the band.

That's why fans keep coming

back, show after show and city after city.

Tony Olivier, who used to live in Sioux Falls, drove up from Lafayette, La., for Wednesday's show, the band's fourth of a 33-date summer tour.

"They've reached a whole other level," Olivier said, offering Pearl Jam as the pre-eminent band of the '90s.

Royce Gilpin drove in from Lexington, Ky. "I'm 25, I'm single and I'm almost an adult," said Gilpin, who will use a week's vacation to see the band four times, including shows tonight and Saturday at Alpine Valley, Wis.

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**Pearl Jam performs at 7:30 Tuesday night at the Target Center in Minneapolis. Tickets cost \$23 plus service charges through Ticketmaster at 334-8181.**