

# From Pearl Jam, an even flow of excellence

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## Pearl Jam

**Where:** Deer Creek Music Center

**When:** Monday night

★★★★

Star ratings: 4 excellent, 3 good, 2 fair, 1 poor

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## By David Lindquist

STAFF WRITER

It's no longer Eddie Vedder's job to save rock 'n' roll.

Luckily, there are enough people who remember his fairly successful (yet stubborn) term in office.

On a dark and murky Monday night, Vedder's band Pearl Jam fed off the energy provided by a sold-out Deer Creek Music Center audience to offer an unforgettable evening of ragged glory (to nick a phrase from the band's longtime pal Neil Young).

Kicking off the third leg of its long-awaited North American tour in Indianapolis, Pearl Jam performed a dynamic set list that was a fan's dream.

From the early grouping of punk screeds *Hail, Hail, Brain of J* and *Last Exit* to coupling *Better Man* and *Daughter* as Clinton family commentary during the show's first encore, Pearl Jam displayed a flawless knack for concert pacing.

And despite a short tease of *Jeremy* and some weak banter from Vedder about the price of lawn tickets and the virtues of agricultural science, not a disingenuous note was played onstage Monday night.

Apparently the last men standing from Seattle's rock explosion of the early '90s, Pearl Jam doesn't stir up the record sales, media attention or radio play it once did. The band's recent 40-minute film

documentary, *Single Video Theory*, is a surefire cure for insomnia.

Nevertheless, the band still possesses an undisputable magic.

During the final moments of Monday's performance of *Alive*, Pearl Jam's first single released way back in 1991, Vedder ran along the lip of the stage slapping hands with fans.

He then paused to survey his band mates in action.

In lead guitarist Mike McCready and drummer Matt Cameron, Vedder watched the evening's instrumental stars.

McCready, looking the most hip of his career with a bleach-blond buzz cut, executed blistering solos during *Immortality* and *Even Flow*.

Cameron, the former member of Soundgarden, gave the band a precise and maniacal foundation throughout the evening.

In bass player Jeff Ament and rhythm guitarist Stone Gossard, Vedder watched the dizzily happy ex-members of Mother Love Bone who gave Pearl Jam to the world.

As *Alive* ended, Vedder gave the first of two commendations for audience participation — not a given by any means during a Pearl Jam performance.

He was right: "Good job, Indy."

Iggy Pop (★★★★½) took the crowd back to 1973 with a 45-minute set of pulverizing rock that probably didn't sound that much different than it did when Pop laid the foundation for punk rock as a member of Detroit's Stooges.

The highlight of Pop's opening set was the devastating and jaw-dropping suite of *Raw Power*, *Search and Destroy*, *Real Wild Child* and *I Wanna Be Your Dog*.