

Pearl Jam rewards a polite crowd

Here's some advice for Pearl Jam fans headed to the upcoming concerts at Madison Square Garden and Continental Arena: Be kind to the opening act, Ben Harper.

The crowd was "polite" to openers Mudhoney and Iggy Pop at the Blockbuster-Sony Music Entertainment Centre in Camden, and the headliner played more than two hours, including an eight-song, two-part encore.

"This is the best crowd Iggy Pop has played to in four or five shows," said Eddie Vedder after "Last Exit," the third song of the first encore. "And thanks for being polite to Mudhoney. Just for that, we're going to do some extra stuff for you."

But first came a two-hour, 18-song set that marked the first time Philadelphia-area fans have seen the band locally since a mere 80-minute set in April 1992 at the Trocadero.

The set list, 75 percent of which featured songs off the first three albums — 1991's "10," 1993's "Vs." and 1994's "Vitalogy" — included: "Release," "Animal," "Hail, Hail," "Given to Fly," "Corduuroy," "MFC," "I Got Id," "Evenflow," "Jeremy," "Daughter," "W.M.A.," "Off He Goes," "Immortality," "Rearview Mirror," "Brain of J.," "Black," "Better Man" and "Alive." "Wishlist," "Last Exit," "Go," "Once" and "Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town" were part of the first encore. Then, despite having to pay union employees overtime for



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Pearl Jam (left to right): Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Stone Gossard, Matt Cameron and Mike McCready.

playing past midnight, the band came out once more for "Porch," featuring a fat, blistering, psychedelic solo by lead guitarist Mike McCready, followed by Vedder leading the crowd through a chant of expletives before saying goodbye.

The band did not seem to want to leave the stage. Yet, at first,

Pearl Jam, particularly Vedder, seemed to be going through the motions.

Then between the jazzy mood swing of "Daughter," followed by a trippy snippet of "W.M.A.," and the Stonesy country ballad, "Off He Goes," the singer said, "One of my favorite episodes of 'Cops' is in Philadelphia. They drive

If you want to go

■ **WHAT:** Pearl Jam/Ben Harper.

■ **WHEN/WHERE:** Tuesday, Continental Airlines Arena, Route 3, East Rutherford, and Sept. 10 and 11, Madison Square Garden, 1 Penn Plaza, New York City. All shows 8 p.m.

■ **TICKETS:** Sold out.

■ **INFO:** (201) 935-3900 or (212) 465-MSG1.

through crack dealers to get through other crack dealers and prostitutes to get to some guy jay-walking ... We're making up for lost time. Thanks for waiting."

Next came the high point of the show: an out-of-body version of "Immortality," featuring a feast of feedback by McCready and all-too-brief solo by former Soundgarden drummer Matt Cameron, Pearl Jam's fifth skinsman in eight years, putting the group in a league with Spinal Tap.

From this point on, the concert was as good a show as I'd ever seen, and I'm not even a huge Pearl Jam fan. For those who are, the strong bond between the crowd and the band was so awesome that the usually somber Vedder couldn't help but smile often.

There were no effects other than a strobe light on an explosive "Review Mirror," which sounded and looked like Studio 54 after a

terrorist attack, and a mirror ball that splattered bubbly shadows on "Wishlist." Pearl Jam let its mean songs speak for themselves.

Besides "Immortality" and the closing, fist-in-the-air sing-along of "Alive," the most moving moment of the show was during "Elderly Woman" when Vedder sang, "But I just want to scream, 'Hello.' My God, it's been so long. Never dreamed you'd return. But now here you are, and here I am!"

The patient, incredibly enthusiastic fans seemed to know he was singing about them.

While Mudhoney seemed stuck in 1991 with its grungy, inaccessible set, the svelte Iggy Pop proved why, at 53, he is still the godfather of punk.

His 45-minute set was at its best during such Stooges classics as "Search and Destroy" and "I Want to Be Your Dog." During the latter tune, Iggy got the crowd fired up by swinging the microphone cord around his neck and walking on all fours.

While there was no glass to roll his chiseled body around on, the long-haired punk pioneer did have some fun crooning the spooky "The Passenger," the autobiographical "Wild One" and a big, greasy version of Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode."

For those who have tickets to the upcoming sold-out shows, you're in for a treat, particularly if Pearl Jam is in a good mood.

— *By Robert Makin*
Staff Writer