

Jammin' in Charleston

With four albums under their belt, Pearl Jam stopped in both Charleston and Charlotte as part of their 'No Code' tour. Two ETC reporters witnessed the excitement of the Oct. 5 concert.

by Jill McCallum and Brian Zufall, staff writers

Pearl Jam fans had waited a long time for their favorite band to visit the state.

On Oct. 5, the wait ended as Eddie Vedder and his boys rolled into the North Charleston Coliseum for their second to last show on the "No Code" tour.

The concert, which sold out in three minutes, combined numbers from the band's four studio albums plus a few of their more popular unreleased songs.

From the opening number, "Sometimes," the show built in intensity as the crowd got into Vedder's powerful and compelling vocals. The band, and especially Vedder, seemed to display a more mature and tame attitude as reflected in their newest album, "No Code," but they were still just as intense and focused as ever in the dark "Blood" and frenzied "Habit."

The 27-song set delivered numerous highlights and standout performances. Early on, "In My Tree" with its pulsing tribal drum rhythms, finally proved new drummer Jack Irons as a worthy heir to former drummer Dave Abbruzzese.

Pumping highlights including a memorable "Betterman," accelerating "Rearviewmirror," and the mellow "Elderly woman behind the counter in a small town," were charged with energy as the crowd's singing almost overpowered Vedder's voice.

"Present Tense," from their most recent album, was an excellent example of the band's diversity as it progressed from a thoughtful two-man ballad to a full-blown rocker.

The band's early efforts such as "Black" and "Even Flow" were disappointing and seemed somewhat stale compared to the band's fresh mature sound. "Black" seemed to have lost much of its dark, passionate intensity, becoming mired in overwhelming guitar instrumentations, instead of focusing on Vedder's brooding vocals.

For the final two songs, Vedder looked to the crowd for inspiration, asking them to vote for what they wanted to hear next. When given three choices, the crowd



JASON GIESLER Special to The Gamecock

Eddie Vedder and the rest of Pearl Jam brought their "No Code" tour to the North Charleston Coliseum Oct. 5. Songs from the band's four albums combined with several unreleased songs highlighted the show. The Fastbacks opened for Pearl Jam.

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unanimously chose the two B-sides to the "Jeremy" single, "Footsteps" and traditional closing number "Yellow Ledbetter," a fan favorite.

The set design was simple and understated, with a candle chandelier suspended above the band and dominating the stage.

The lighting effects emphasized the moods of the songs such as how the deep red background and pulsating strobe effects gave "Blood" an urgent ferocity while the swirling mirrorball in "Betterman" illuminated the tender power of Vedder's soulful voice.

Each member of the band was given their chance to shine such as rhythm guitarist Stone Gossard in his first lead vocal performance of his own "Mankind," and lead guitarist Mike McCready in his Hendrix-like solo in "Yellow Ledbetter."

Bassist Jeff Ament kept up the onstage physical energy through his typical bounciness and upbeat attitude. Meanwhile, Vedder seemed very tame and mellow

at this show and didn't perform any of his usual crowd-pleasing stunts such as jumping into the pit.

The hip hop, punk style of the Fastbacks, the Seattle-based band who opened for Pearl Jam, did a great job of warming up the crowd, but the band was easily forgettable once Pearl Jam took over.

As in every typical rock concert, the fans went wild—moshing and body-surfing to the fullest. The fans in the front of the floor were packed like sardines as each tried to get closer to their favorite band.

Vedder told the moshers, "You guys are crazy," and dedicated the hard-rocking "Whipping" to these fans.

The fans' passion for the band was furious, and almost extreme. One woman from Seattle said she had only missed two of the band's 11 shows on the "No Code" tour, while a 24-year-old graduate cried because she had waited so long to see Pearl Jam live.

Several songs into the show, Vedder asked the crowd, "How are we doing?" The ecstatic fans roared their approval to which Vedder responded, "You're not so bad yourself."

Toward the end of the show, Vedder commented that it seems the second to last show of a tour is always the best. And, judging by the band's performance and crowd's reaction, he may definitely have been right.

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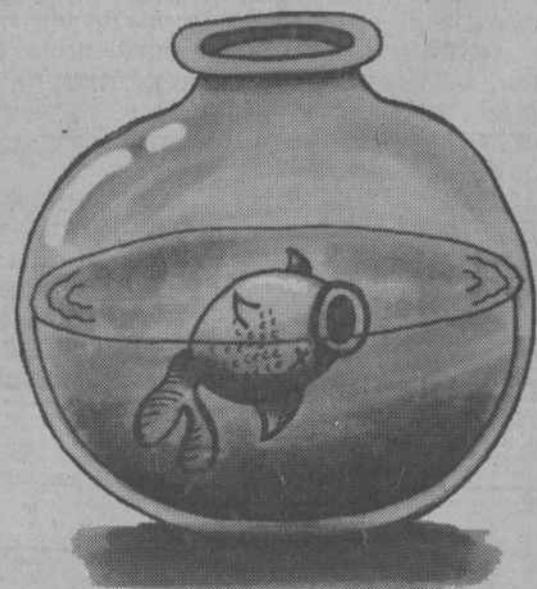
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