

CD REVIEW

Pearl Jam crafts new sounds



"RIOT ACT"
Pearl Jam
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY CHARLES TOMLINSON
THE GAMECOCK

How different can an alternative-rock band be? The formula for the genre is straightforward: a singer with a ragged, forceful voice; a simple, powerful drum beat; and electric guitars that kick into distortion on the dramatic choruses.

But Pearl Jam hasn't always adhered to the typical method. The band has had its punk moments, such as on "Spin the Black Circle," but it has also crafted countrified tunes, such as "Off He Goes," and moody, almost-emo songs, such as "Wishlist."

"Riot Act," the band's new album, is undeniably Pearl Jam, and Eddie Vedder's guttural voice is unmistakable above all else. "Ghost" is the essence of Pearl Jam, with a dirty guitar tone, rough-sounding drums and a

winding guitar solo. The same goes for "Save You," the album's only full-group songwriting effort.

Although "Riot Act" is often familiar hard-rock territory for Pearl Jam (which is by no means shabby territory), it shows several signs of the band stepping outside grunge boundaries again. "Thumbing My Way" and "All or None" recall the more subdued Pearl Jam of "No Code" and "Yield." Drummer Matt Cameron pulls out the brushes to create an airy percussive effect on the songs and proves he is capable of the ultraquiet dynamics he never got to play in Soundgarden.

Cameron is perhaps the biggest contributor of the sonic departures on "Riot Act." He only had one co-writing credit on "Binaural," Pearl Jam's 2000 album and Cameron's first studio album with the band. But on "Riot Act," he wrote three songs. "You Are," which he penned, features a scratchy staccato guitar and a deep, AC/DC-sounding snare drum, creating a thick backbeat for the band to coast on.

Cameron also wrote the lyrics and music for "Wanted to Get Right," which contains an unpredictable Vedder vocal rhythm and a ringy rhythm guitar playing harmonics. "Cropduster," another Cameron song, however, is closer to standard Pearl Jam craftsmanship - which is still well above the average in rock music.

Taking his role as front man to

the extreme, Vedder wrote a third of the album himself, with the exception of "Love Boat Captain," a wistful love song he co-wrote with keyboardist Boom Gaspar.

Vedder, as always, peppers his lyrics with vivid imagery. On "Green Disease," he sings, "And like weeds with big leaves/Stealing light from what's beneath/Where they have more/Still they take more." On the bluesy "1/2 Full," which sounds like a kickback to the "Ten"-era song "Deep," he cynically sings, "Don't see some men as half empty/See them half full of..." You can guess the rest.

A spoken-word piece with sung choruses, "Bushleaguer," as the title should imply, seems to be a caustic criticism of our nation's president. Vedder says, "Swinging for the fence, got lucky with a strike/Drilling for fear. Makes the job simple." And then he uses baseball terminology to effectively make a point about the hand-downs politicians receive when their dads are prominent figures: "Born on third; thinks he got a triple."

"Riot Act" is Pearl Jam, and it's rock music. But it's far from static. The band explores new textures and, as always, keeps its dynamics fluid. Pearl Jam knows how to make a fresh approach to its music while still sounding like itself.

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From left, Mike McCready, Stone Gossard, Jeff Ament, Eddie Vedder and Matt Cameron make up Pearl Jam, which recently emerged from the studio with a dynamic new album.

PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

BRIEFLY

D'Angelo subdued during Sunday arrest

RICHMOND, VA. (AP) — R&B singer D'Angelo had to be subdued with pepper spray after he resisted arrest on misdemeanor charges of aggressive driving and other counts, police said.

Chesterfield police said they went to D'Angelo's suburban Richmond home after a confrontation he reportedly had with a woman at a gas station Sunday. The singer cursed at the woman and spit on her after he cut her off in his sport utility vehicle, police said.

D'Angelo resisted police as

they tried to arrest him Monday and had to be subdued with the spray, Maj. James B. Bourque said.

The singer was released on his recognizance pending a Jan. 15 appearance in Chesterfield General Court.

Bids on Eminem house hit \$1 million

WARREN, MICH. (AP) — Bidding for one of Eminem's boyhood homes has surpassed \$1 million on an Internet auction site.

The modest Warren home, listed on eBay since Thursday, was

appraised at \$91,000. Bidding opened at \$120,000, and by Tuesday afternoon, the high bid was just over \$1 million.

"It's just amazing the response we're getting," said Sebastian Lucido, a Utica attorney who bought the house with Roland Frascchetti, a Macomb County commissioner and real estate developer.

Eminem's uncle, Todd Nelson, sold the house this month for \$45,000 to Lucido and Frascchetti.

The 1,300-square-foot home has three bedrooms and two bathrooms. It was built in 1940 and has been in Eminem's family for at least 50 years, Frascchetti said.

Audioslave

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

case can on "Like a Stone," "Hypnotize," "What You Are" and "Gasoline." Cornell is even given the lead guitar in "Getaway Car," one of the more Soundgarden-esque songs.

The album was produced by Rick Rubin, whose legendary work spans decades, back to the creation of rap label Def Jam, and whose most recent production credits were on System of a Down's 2001 album, "Toxicity." Rubin has also worked with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Beastie Boys, and rapper/poet Saul Williams, developing a penchant to be involved with more creative projects.

Cornell's influence on Audioslave bears the mark of "Euphoria Morning" more than of his contributions to Soundgarden, which might be disheartening to grunge fans. But Cornell's vocal contribution is superb, and is much more musical than his screaming, which was overused on Soundgarden's last studio album, "Down on the Upside," from 1996. Because Audioslave rarely falls into the habit of overdubbing vocals, it has the potential to be incredible in concert.

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Bunker makes bigotry funny



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The joke's always on the narrow-minded father in "All in the Family."

He's an irritable bigot; he talks down to his clueless, deferent wife; and he calls his son-in-law "meathead." But Archie Bunker, played by Carroll O'Connor, found popularity on '70s television as he sat in his worn-out chair in his Astoria living room.

Any time I hear Archie sing in his Queens brogue, "Boy, the way Glenn Miller played," my eyes light up. I know I'm in for a half-hour of nothing but laughter. And when Edith screeches, "And you knew where you WEEEER-RRE then," the grating sound seems like heaven for my eardrums.

Archie, however, wasn't so nice about Edith's vocalizations. He once said, "Listen, Edith, I know you're singing, you know you're singing, but the neighbors may think I'm torturing you."

Archie Bunker was an intolerant man with a skewed worldview, and believe it or not, that's what made him funny. Maybe that's because I always know how Archie will react (and not just because I've already seen all the episodes on Nick at Nite). How he'll flip out when he sees the picture of his niece and Lionel, the son of the Bunkers' black neighbors, the

Jeffersons.

Yes, "The Jeffersons" was a spin-off of "All in the Family"; so were "Maude" and "Good Times."

I can also predict how Archie will react anytime Michael Stivic, his "meathead" son-in-law, brings up atheism.

And when it comes to religion, Archie said it best: "God don't make no mistakes. That's how he got to be God."

Some of my friends, however, don't find Mr. Bunker to be so funny. One of my friends called him a bigot and followed it with a couple of expletives.

I have to agree — yes, he is an intolerant bigot. A character as politically incorrect as Archie would never see the light of modern television.

But, as creator Norman Lear pointed out, the joke in every episode inevitably fell on Archie. Edith; Gloria, his daughter; and Michael always came off as the smart ones, while Archie was the

bumbling idiot trying in vain to make his point. Audiences laugh at him, not with him. He made outrageous statements that no one in their right mind would agree with: "Jesus was a Jew, yes, but only on his mother's side." And he tried to defend President Nixon when speaking with Michael: "He didn't lie! He just forgot to tell the truth!"

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And he tried to defend President Nixon when speaking with Michael: "He didn't lie! He just forgot to tell the truth!"

And he told Mike: "You're the one who needs an American history lesson. You don't know anything about Lady Liberty, standing there in the harbor with her torch out high, screaming out to all the nations of the world: 'Send me your poor, your deadbeats, your filthy!'"

Sammy Davis Jr. once made a guest appearance on "All in the Family," and his exchanges with Archie were some of the funniest the show ever saw.

Archie: "I think that, I mean, if God had meant for us to be together, he'd a put us together. But look what he done. He put you over in Africa, and put the rest of us in all the white countries."

Davis Jr.: "Well, he must've told 'em where we were because somebody came and got us."

Archie's endless malapropisms also made him the butt of the show's jokes. He just couldn't say things right. Here are some examples:

- ◆ Cuisine: zucchini
- ◆ Gynecologist: gynecologist
- ◆ Menstrual show: minstrel show
- ◆ Terlit: toilet
- ◆ Trampaloon: trampoline
- ◆ Weirwolf: werewolf

One particular conversation with Michael sums up Archie's mixed-up speech.

Michael: "You know, you are totally incomprehensible."

Archie: "Maybe so, but I make a lot of sense."

O'Connor died June 21, 2001, but his politically incorrect humor will live in infamy as long as "All in the Family" reruns grace Nick at Nite every evening.

Tomlinson is a third-year print journalism student. His column appears Wednesdays in The Mix.

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