

concerts. Fugazi, who charged only \$5 at their Los Angeles Palladium show, were able to negotiate the Ticketmaster service fee down to \$1.25.

Unlike Fugazi, Pearl Jam are very definitely signed to a large corporation. The Epic label

McCaughan told *Option*. "It's hard for us to tell the venue to not sell to a store that's going to make a lot of money; it's going to be hard to tell the venue not to sell through Ticketmaster."

If you're in an alternative band, playing the

In some cities, the band chose to sell the tickets via their fan club Ten. Is this bypassing of the existing system viable in the long term?

Pearl Jam versus Ticketmaster is now a political issue in the USA as politicians think it's a 'Joe Six-pack' issue — a populist debate that also affects the country music fan and the sports fan.

Pearl Jam's conflicts with venues have also extended to sponsors' hoardings. When gates were late opening for their April Miami concert, the police were called and 16 people arrested. The delay was due to Pearl Jam insisting on AT&T corporate signs being covered up so they were not visible to the audience. Maybe 16 fans would've preferred to be exposed to the evil of a venue sponsor's logo than spend the night in a Miami jail.

"I don't want to be the travelling medicine show where we go out and do the song and dance," Vedder told the *Los Angeles Times*, "And someone else drops the back of the wagon and starts selling crap. I don't want to use our music to sell anything — or anyone else use it."

The band are not alone in seeking to distance their music from the corporate sponsor. Neil Young championed the cause with his 1988 'This Note's For You' video, satirising the greed inherent in wealthy Wacko Jacko's liaison with Pepsi.

This year the crass, corporate, multi-media recreation of Woodstock wooed many major alternative acts with mega-buck fees. Who would've thought Nine Inch Nails, Green Day and Red Hot Chili Peppers would turn-up to play alongside Crosby Stills and Nash?

The rumour persisted that Pearl Jam would play the event, although manager Kelly Curtis continually reiterated: "We're definitely *not* doing Woodstock." Curtis told *Rolling Stone* the band were excited about opening on a few dates of the Rolling Stones USA tour, but these gigs have not happened so far. However they got to play with kindred spirit Neil Young at the October 1 Bridge School Foundation benefit show, in San Francisco. Pearl Jam got up to help Neil Young out on his finale, the

recent single 'Piece of Crap'.

With the new album *Vitalogy*, as with *Vs.*, Pearl Jam do not intend to make any videos. They got as far as contacting director Martin Scorsese about making a video for their last album, but nothing eventuated.

Vedder's antagonism towards media extends both to music television and music magazines — he doesn't want his music framed by the advertising that appears in both media. Talking to the *Los Angeles Times*, the singer refers to the way "the media exploit and scoop out your chest without leaving anything behind".

Undoubtedly the band's label would like promotional videos, but Epic VP of promotion Harvey Leeds told *Billboard*: "We respect their creative vision."

As they back away from videos and computer ticketing — is their creative vision focussed on the future or the past? Isn't there a hint of quaint nostalgia for times gone by in their album *10* being issued on vinyl for the first time [in the USA] this month and the vinyl *Vitalogy* appearing in stores a week before the CD and the cassette? It's certainly apparent in their recent CD single, entitled 'Spin the Black Circle', which has 'viva la vinyl' scrawled on its sleeve.

If the biggest band in the USA can't tour their own country, who's winning? Not Pearl Jam or their fans or 'Joe Six-pack'.

MURRAY CAMMICK



they are on is owned by Sony, and the band have been with the company since their first album. Some would argue that Pearl Jam are in bed with the corporate demons they wish to be seen fighting.

Pearl Jam sought to benefit from the success a large company like Sony could offer them, but now they appear to want to limit the corporate excess — in their manager's words — "to pull back the reins on the band's overwhelming success."

Maybe Pearl Jam are naive, or have an excessive dose of romanticism in their thinking about art and commerce? They still seem to identify with the banal sentiments of indie label SST's infamous bumper sticker — **CORPORATE ROCK STILL SUCKS!**

Soundgarden's Kim Thayil is blunt on the issue: "I'm tired of the whole lie that alternative music somehow offers something that's anti-corporate."

Sony are able to indulge mega-selling Pearl Jam's unusual perspective — even helped them to make their free-to-air radio broadcast a reality, knowing that such a special is a master tape for bootleggers. Usually a radio syndicator would sell such a concert to FM radio stations, but the Pearl Jam concert was free to all stations. Since the broadcast, Epic have even turned a blind eye to some radio stations giving away CD copies of the concert as prizes to listeners.

A letter in a USA magazine about "Eddie (It's So Hard to Be a Rock Star) Vedder" earned a caustic reply from the singer — "It's not hard to be a rock star. If you want to go around fucking women and cleaning a bunch of teenagers of all their dough because they like your band and charge them up the ying for t-shirts and concert tickets, that's easy. That's playing the game! What's hard is trying to stop playing the game, to try to treat people fairly and with respect."

As the alternative evolves into mainstream, the transition to the bigger venues is causing hassles for other bands, not just Pearl Jam. SuperChunk are five dollars in their home town, but this year they're \$12.50 or \$16.50 on tour. "It's definitely a shock," frontman Mac

rock dives and charging less than 10 bucks at the door. Then suddenly you're famous, your tickets cost twice as much, and your band is still getting less than 10 bucks per ticket on the door. But you just got a good sound system, bigger press advertisements, a rider, and your fans were able to buy their tickets in advance — and they paid for that privilege.

Is this a system that's unfair, or just a modern, convenient computer service for ticket buyers? And is this a service for which most people are prepared to pay?

If you live in the 'burbs of a large American city, you don't want to drive 20 miles for a ticket, so you'd value being able to buy a higher priced ticket on the phone — or would you?

Pearl Jam's first skirmish with Ticketmaster arose from the process of booking by phone. The band undertook a small venue tour early 1994, apparently oblivious to the fact that because the venues were small, most fans would miss out. First to book got tickets — so their audience were largely credit card holders who could purchase by phone.

Pearl Jam were incensed that if you didn't have a credit card you were disadvantaged in buying, or possibly unable to buy, a ticket via Ticketmaster. This smacked of the corporate world, so Ticketmaster conceded that Pearl Jam fans could book for the tour by phone without credit cards and then pay by cash within 48 hours.

HEY, TEN CLUB MEMBER:

**PEARL JAM
INVITES YOU TO A
special
INTIMATE
PERFORMANCE**

**Interested?
WELL HERE IS THE LOW DOWN,**

**ON MARCH 13th, the band will
be playing a small venue in Chicago
and we are offering you the chance to buy
tickets before they go on sale to the general
public.**



Liz Phair

Quote

"You'd think being a rock star was all decadence and glamour but I've never felt so responsible in my whole life. I have to keep thinking like an accountant, media artist, musician. The sad thing is, all this came about 'cause I sat on my ass, diddling in my room, and created songs. Now I have hardly any time to get bored enough to be funky and creative."

LIZ PHAIR

"I tried to learn how to meditate but this instructor told me I didn't have enough energy."

J.MASCIS, Dinosaur Jnr.

"Home is for playing Pac-Man and frying chicken. My concept of a kitchen is where you get in there and fry."

LUTHER VANDROSS

"I expect to be judged on my work. I expect to be judged on how I treat other people and how I carry myself as a human being. I do not flaunt my sexuality. I do not deny my sexuality. It is *my* sexuality. It is not the public's sexuality."

BOB MOULD, Sugar.

"Who cares about being a star? I don't care about that. I mean, they can make anyone a star — just put a little make-up on them, get a music video out."

LEONARDO DICAPRIO

"I just feel silly talking about Pearl Jam all the time. There's so many great bands — you hate talking about yourself and want to talk about the new Buffalo Tom record or talk about Henry Rollins."

EDDIE VEDDER

"If I'd gotten the attention on *Murmer* that those guys got on *Nevermind* I wouldn't be around to tell the tale. I would've . . . I would've died."

MICHAEL STIPE

more cranberries...

(only a limited number of their latest CD "No Need To Argue" contain a bonus disc with 2 live tracks.)