

LENNY KRAVITZ



also at:
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Oct 30

UNIVERSAL LOVE TOUR

with Special Guests

BLIND MELON

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Over 21



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NEIL YOUNG AND BOOKER T AND THE MGs, PEARL JAM, BLIND MELON and PETE DROGE, PORTLAND MEADOWS, 9/6.

After I got over the irony of Neil playing at a track, *sans* the Horse, I bronzed my earplugs. If you experienced it, you know what I mean. It's shows like this that send paltry little know-it-all critics like myself to the soup line. Neil was monumental and my words on these pages can't convey what I felt. Quite simply, it reaffirmed everything I've ever believed about the power of rock 'n' roll.

Neil and the MGs are an unbelievable force and make quite a noise together. Essentially, it's an ensemble fronted by perhaps the archetypal soul man. Even on acoustic numbers like "Only Love Can Break Your Heart" and "Harvest Moon," where the band's contributions were more subtle, the soulfulness was abundant. The electric numbers ("Love to Burn," "Powderfinger," "Down By the River") overwhelmed. "Southern Man" thrived anew, the intensity and irony strengthened by a band from Memphis playing rhythm and blues. Young's disgust suggests that we're not as far removed from Reconstruction as a time line would suggest.

His playing throughout was from the heart. Young's delivery is unparalleled in rock 'n' roll. That's all I can say.

Pearl Jam have been unfairly pooh-poohed by the "they weren't on Sub Pop" crowd but they have chemistry and turned in a solid performance, punctuated by a closing duet with Victoria Williams on "Crazy Mary." Their set was a high energy affair, probably more appreciated by the younger crowd — which is just fine. Those who left after their set missed the collaboration on the "Rockin' in the Free World" finale, which ultimately proved *denouement*. There were plenty of fists waving nonetheless.

Blind Melon were fair, and local boy makes good Pete Droge turned in a fine acoustic set to start things off. Amen.

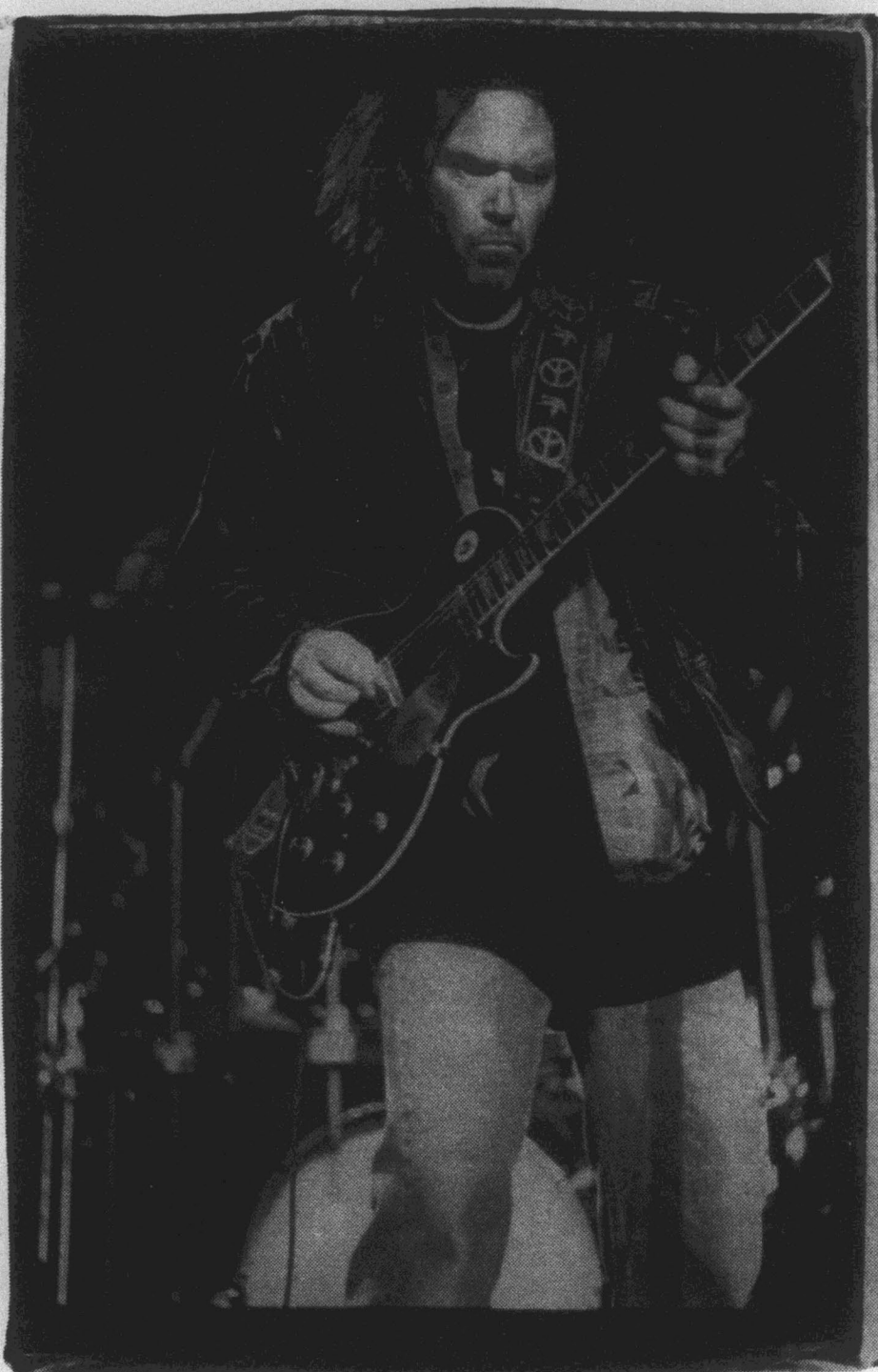
—JONATHAN B. PONT

SUEDE, GIGOLO AUNTS, ROCKCANDY, 9/22. For the rest of the world, this is the gig of the year. Suede's meteoric rise to fame, and non-stop adulation since, has seen sold-out shows across the country. Leave it to Seattle to rain on their parade. A half-full house is no way to treat, not the Next Big Thing, but The Big Thing.

Sadly, Boston's Gigolo Aunts were a poor choice for opener. Their brand of popmetal is competent, but more appropriate for Soundgarden than Suede. And performing a Posies cover was a huge mistake, greeted with dead silence, forcing the Aunts to change songs in mid-strum.

But, when singer Brett Anderson and guitarist/pianist Bernard Butler alone opened Suede's set with "The Next Life," the crowd erupted. The intimacy of piano and vocals set the tone for the show, and highlighted both Suede's strengths and weaknesses.

In a small room, Anderson was able to reach out and touch his adoring fans. Butler, too, was able to connect. The question is, can Suede project that intimacy to a larger audience? On the high energy songs like "Metal Mickey," "Moving," and even "The Drowners," the answer



PHOTOGRAPH BY LANCE MERCER

was a resounding yes. Anderson's fragile vocal sound is inadequate for rockers, and he definitely struggled, but still succeeded admirably.

On the more delicate numbers, "Pantomime Horse," "He's Dead" and "Sleeping Pills" Suede cast a mesmerizing net across the whole audience. Would it have worked at the Moore? Judging by tonight's numbers, we'll never know. Oh, and the shouting fans were *not* greeted with an encore.

—JO ANN GREENE



C A P S U L E S

MORPHINE actually compelled most of the audience at the Croc to, err, *dance*, despite the fact that the band consists of a two-string bass (really just a home-modified guitar), a baritone sax, and drums. Actually, they were out here from Boston to play a private party for Nike. Go figure...**THE LEMONS** and **EASY** filled the Colourbox with mobs of appropriately dressed hipsters, all observing as Easy drummer Chris Friel actually had a beer (as in: one) for his birthday. Meanwhile, the Lemons imitated a flock of thirsty giraffes, honing their stand-still-with-ye-gams-spread-whilst-ya-rock-dude poses for the adoring masses who were all just trying to get a glimpse of their pretty little heads....**Downtown's** coolest java hut, the Penny University (2020 2nd), has been hosting the swinging sounds of the **JOHN BADDINGTON QUARTET** most Friday

nights. This young ensemble's latest outing featured soulful interpretations of classics by, but not limited to, Mingus, Monk, and the Duke. Man, these cats are crazy...**THE NEW BOMB TURKS** and **ZIPGUN** caused many a punk head to connect with floor during their explosive, brutally executed sets at the Off Ramp, and whatever they lacked in precision was amply made up for in lurching exuberance...**THE BREEDERS** played a kinda secret six song "acoustic" set at the OK (acoustic: *adj.* 1. drummer only has two drums and keeps trying to play cymbals that aren't there 2. Kim only plays acoustic guitar once and when she does it sounds like a refrigerator falling down stairs through a distortion pedal) to warm us up for their smashing performance at the Off Ramp the next night. Naturally, they were brilliant, all the things the Pixies shoulda been and in a better place, plus the added fun of watching Kelley gazing at her guitar as if it were offered to her in a dream, and you know, they sounded at their best when they sounded like no one else. Which was often enough. And Josephine sang, and Kim laughed and smoked and dropped things...**Juliana Hatfield's** live voice is less frail, more aggressive than last year, and painstakingly precise, and when **THE JULIANA HATFIELD THREE** played at the Backstage she twisted her songs into new contortions, stretching "Feelin' Massachusetts" into a gritty thud-floyd romp and morphing "The Lights" into a sorta prog-metal thing, egged on by Todd Phillips' lucid drumming and Dean Fisher's densely inverted basslines.... Pity the other **CRANBERRIES** because they live in the shadow of one of the most stunning voices around. They provide a solid background for Dolores to color with her effortlessly beautiful singing, but no one will ever cheer them for a guitar solo the way they cheer every soaring high note out of her throat. She could have started her own cult that night at the Ex Hall — there were hundreds of people worshipping at her feet already.

—Compiled by Patrick Barber, with reports from Grant Alden, Courtney Miller, Robert Nyberg, Kevin Rexroat, Mary Schuh and Anna Woolverton.

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