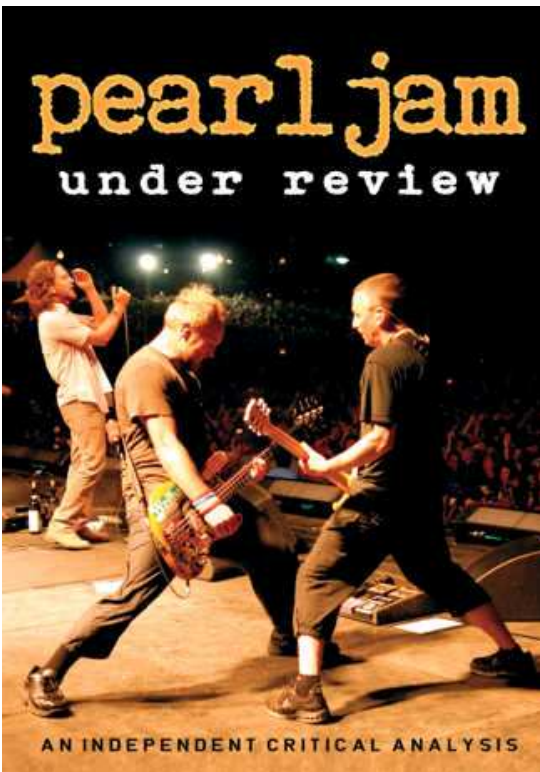


**FAME Review: Pearl Jam - Under Review (DVD)**





## Under Review

### [Pearl Jam](#)

*Sexy Intellectual* - SIDVD558 (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange  
by **Mark S. Tucker**  
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In a review of the label's exquisite document on Eric Clapton during the 60s ([here](#)), I mention that *Sexy Intellectual* is rapidly becoming a leading voice in the metamorphosing arena of analysis and criticism. With this overview DVD of Pearl Jam, they re-prove that contention. Rather than adopt the adulatory commercial superficiality of the market, ***Under Review*** examines the genuinely artistic ambitions of Eddie Vedder & Co., providing a rather anarchistic take on a band that has never stood still to please the monkeymass but instead dedicated itself to the muse and the inner voice.

It's not a mistake to draw comparisons between Vedder and Jim Morrison. Both embody the mercurial, the Byronic, the introspective, and the haunted, vehicles for the generation of true art. They also share a certain baroquity, harking back to Romanticism while forcing it into the present, and it's no mistake that Jim and Eddie are both properly characterized as "darkly charismatic" (an outtake from the band live during the ***Vitalogy*** tour shows Vedder looking strikingly like Morrison). They both had something to say, they were poets, and they were going to say it, damn everyone in the process. This is still Pearl Jam's genius, and it caused them to become not punk, not grunge, but, as London Bridge Studios owner Jonathan Plum puts it, "good old honest rock and roll".

***Pearl Jam Under Review*** isn't just a PJ overview, it's also a great quick study of the Seattle scene as well, tossing in tons of anecdotes, insights, and opinions on the evolving persona of the area, a fitful, chaotic, nihilistic transformation that actually found its locus in Nirvana and Pearl Jam, the latter of which ironically quickly further dissociated the milieu. In many ways, in fact, Vedder & Co. were the Seattle scene's death knell. This is never mentioned directly but is broadly inferred. Perhaps the most cogent and articulate critical voice here is Kyle Anderson's, as opposed to Joe Levy's, a guy hobbled by a brain-stultifying residence in the morass of ***Rolling Stone***.

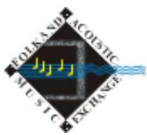
As with all vid-panoramas, the viewer is headily assaulted with performance clips, photos, flowing dialogue, and everything a really good document should bludgeon the consumer with. As against the epilepsy-inducing effluvia of most MTV-styled chaosiums, ***Under Review*** is streamlined, well planned, but also satisfyingly brisk. Cutting a course between the thud and thunder of the band itself and then the critical asides, a balance is achieved, vibrant and informative. This lends gravity to the story of Pearl Jam's increasing rebellion against the business machine, a juggernaut the band took immediate action against, anarchism rearing its beautiful head in definitive action. The 60s came alive more than ever in the ensemble's ethos. As the review proceeds, that becomes all the more evident as Vedder wrestles with the demons of idolatry, disciplining himself in a return to the streets.

And that's where I'll leave you, dear reader, posed on the lip of evolution so as not to be a buzzkill, leaving the main course untouched, for your delectations alone. However, I should also mention that I've no idea who's editing these SI releases but, whomever it is, he or she is that rarest of avis'es: a **really** good discerning co-artist, someone who understands pacing and tight narrative brilliantly. Would to God the print medium in music had one or two. They all, basically, either correctly step back from the process, which is hugely beneficial, or suck horse choads in trying to become the writer or a school marm, which is disastrous.

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