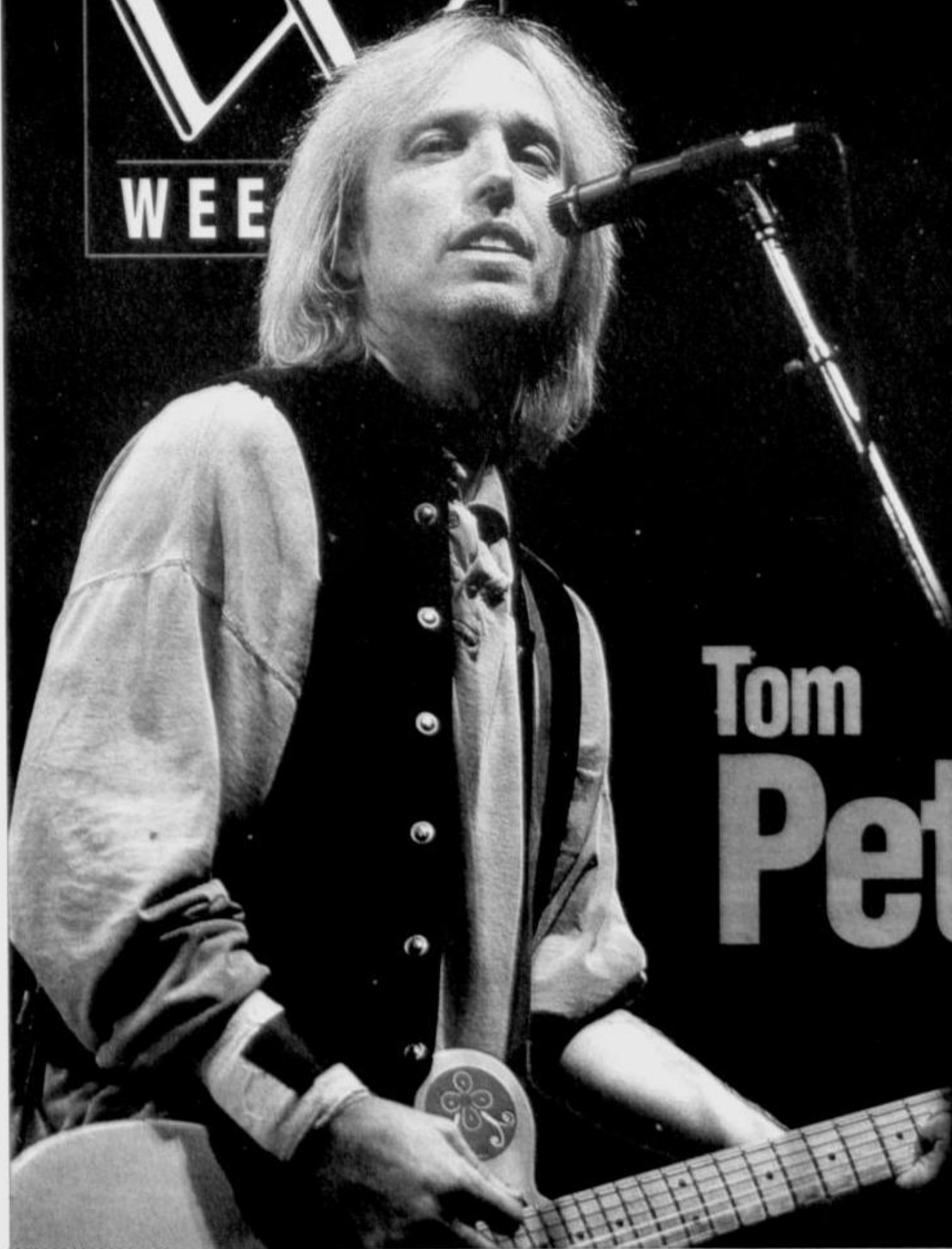


Sept. 3, 1999

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW • SPOKANE, WASH.

W
WEE



ALSO

**Alice
Cooper**

in Spokane

**Steve
Miller**

at The Gorge

**'Les
Miz'**

opens for
another run

**Tom
Petty**

Blue-collar
superstar
rocks
The Gorge

Movies: 'Outside Providence' • 'Chill Factor'

58

'Echo'

from the

Past

In latest album, Tom Petty returns to bolder rock sound

By Steve Morse
Boston Globe

First, ticket prices. They're still skyrocketing for big-name rock acts. The Rolling Stones shattered all illusions with the \$300 and \$650 ticket peaks for their spring tour. And this summer's Bob Dylan/Paul Simon bill and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young tour have \$100-plus prices — mere chicken feed next to the Stones, but still deflating to fans who believe in rock as a populist, Everyman genre.

How refreshing, then, to hear Tom Petty cling to virtual working-class hero status by keeping his tickets at about \$50 for a summer tour with his band, the Heartbreakers.

"I don't want to wind up just playing to the elite," says Petty. "I see some people that don't mind that, but I don't think my fans would appreciate it too much."

"I think sometimes we're fools for not going for the dough, but I don't want to feel that we're taking advantage of people," adds Petty, a hardscrabble Gainesville, Fla., native who now lives in Los Angeles. "I don't think ticket prices have to be so high — and we're not at the point where we're trying to cash in and

CONCERT PREVIEW

Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers

With: The Blind Boys of Alabama

When: Saturday and Sunday at 7 p.m.

Location: The Gorge Amphitheatre in George, Wash.

Tickets: Tickets are \$32.25 and \$52.25, available through Ticketmaster outlets or by calling (509) 735-0500.

retire or anything. We don't even use sponsors."

Petty, whose new album, "Echo," reaffirms his role as one of rock's great songwriters, is so adamant on the ticket issue that he also dismisses the "golden circle" seating concept that has been fashionable in recent years.

"I won't go for golden circle seating," Petty says of those higher-priced seats. "I always resisted that and have had huge arguments with promoters about it. I just don't think that one part of the audience ought to be treated better



Photo by Martyn Adams

Continued. **Petty/Page 7** Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers have gone away from the acoustic sound in their latest album.



Steve Miller, whose rock career has spanned more than 30 years, performs at The Gorge tonight at 7 p.m.

Steve Miller offers 'Last Call'

By Winda Benedetti
Staff writer

From blues rocker to pop rocker, Steve Miller's career has spanned some 30 plus years.

Back in the late '60s, he led the blues band the Ardells, which later turned into the Fabulous Knight Rams. He spent time in the Goldberg-Miller Blues band and eventually started his self-named group, the Steve Miller Blues Band.

The mid-'70s and early '80s found Miller's music taking on a slicker sheen as he made hits out of "Fly Like An Eagle," "Jungle Love" and "Abracadabra."

A genre-defying player, Miller performed on an album of jazz standards in 1988 — to much critical if not financial success.

These days Miller is back on the road for what he's calling "The Last Call" summer tour.

At The Gorge tonight, Miller is joined

by friend and long-time musical compadre Curtis Salgado. The respected Portland bluesman released a top-notch CD earlier this year called "Wiggle Outta This."

Revered Chicago bluesman Buddy Guy opens the show tonight. Guy's 1998 album "Heavy Love" was nominated for a Grammy.

The show at The Gorge starts tonight at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$49.90/\$34.95, available through Ticketmaster outlets or by calling (509) 735-0500.

Petty

Continued from page 6

than the other, or served drinks during the show."

(There are two seating prices at The Gorge, but no golden circle.)

Petty recently played a week of dates at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco — and loved it because his fans had equal access at getting up front. "If you wanted to get up front, you just had to kind of work your way up there. Nobody was paying more to get there," says Petty, who used the shows to debut tracks from his new CD, as well as range into cover songs by everyone from Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry to the Box Tops and the Delmore Brothers.

"We hope to bring some of that same spontaneous spirit on tour," says Petty.

A similar exuberance marks "Echo." It's filled with high-energy rock 'n' roll and suggests a return to Petty's early, Byrds-and-British Invasion-influenced sound. It's a departure from the Heartbreakers' last hit disc, "Wildflowers," which was milder and more deliberate (and also sold 3 million copies).

"We set out to make a rock 'n' roll record this time," says Petty. "We purposely wouldn't write any slow songs until the very end of the record, because sometimes ballads creep in and you get a whole load of them.

"I just felt like I had done a lot of stuff based around the acoustic guitar, so with this album, I set it up as more of an electric thing," he says. "We have such a good little rock 'n' roll band, and I wanted to get them on record doing what they do best. With the last few albums, I've been really concerned with craft. But here, I just wanted to catch the vibe of what the band does with a song.

The stars of the Heartbreakers, apart from Petty, are guitarist Mike Campbell (who sings a track for the first time, the raucous "I Don't Want to Fight") and keyboardist Benmont Tench, whom Petty has known since the age of 11.

"The Heartbreakers started in 1976, but I've played with Mike and Ben since 1970," says Petty. "I grew up with these people. I'm much closer to them than to any family members. We've spent a long time together."

That long time has taken Petty through nearly 20 top 40 hits, from the early "Breakdown" and "Don't Do Me Like That," to "You Got Lucky," "Jammin' Me," "Free Fallin'," "Mary Jane's Last Dance," and "Learning to Fly." Whatever the trend of the day, Petty seems to have transcended it with his honest, sometimes defiant, sometimes whimsical, music.

The new album runs from the chiming rock of "Free Girl Now" (about a woman freed from an abusive relationship) to the Everly Brothers-like "Accused of Love," the tongue-in-cheek "Swingin'" (with humorous references to Benny Goodman and Sonny Liston), and the gentle "Room at the Top," a tribute to deceased Beach Boy (and Petty idol and friend) Carl Wilson.