Geils played them all at the Music Hall

By Drew Blakeman

"Get ready, 'cuz we're gonna play 'em all for you." So claimed Geils' lead singer Peter Wolf, and the group very nearly fulfilled his promise. Two hours of non-stop frenzy plus two encore-delighted sell-out crowds at the Music Hall on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, as Geils celebrated their tenth anniversary of working together as a band.

Geils, formerly known as The J. Geils Band, recently shortened its name because "everybody was calling it 'Geils' anyway," according to drummer Stephen Bladd. Under any name, this six-man group can rock with anyone. The sheer power of their music makes their concerts fantastic, almost as event. This one was no exception. In fact, they seemed to have really wanted to do an especially good job for their diehard hometown fans. They succeeded.

Formed in the Boston area in 1967, the old J. Geils Band released its first album in 1971. Its chart and latest release, Monkey Island, was featured heavily in the quick-paced set, which included the title cut and the current single "You're the Only One." But Geils also included many of their older and more familiar rockers, songs like "Serve You Right to Suffer" and "Where Did Our Love Go."

After a half-hour delay, Geils opened the show with rollicking renditions of "Detroit Breakdown" and "Homework." The group moved swiftly from song to song, never letting too long on any particular one. This enabled the band to play more than thirty numbers during the concert, a large majority of their recorded material.

Geils is composed of six members: Peter Wolf on lead vocals, Seth Justman on keyboards, Stephen Bladd on drums, Danny Klein on bass, Magic Dick on mouth harp, and J. Geils himself on lead guitar. All six turned in outstanding performances, both individually and together. Geils and the rest of the band all keep a low profile on stage compared to Wolf's antics. His stage presence is awesome: he is everywhere at once and in no one place for very long.

It is amazing that the group could maintain such an intense level of energy throughout the entire length of the concert without more than an occasional very short break. Peter Wolf never stopped moving on stage. He jumped, he leaped, he shook, he rolled on the floor. He invited everyone in the audience to join him in his high-strung antics, but no one could match his hyperactivity. Some of the things Wolf did to his microphone would get him arrested on sexual molestation charges if he attempted them on people.

Magic Dick plays his mouth organ, the rest of the band and the audience to join him in his high-strung antics, but no one could match his hyperactivity. Some of the things Wolf did to his microphone would get him arrested on sexual molestation charges if he attempted them on people. Everyone in the band was spotlighted for a special performance during virtually every song. A twenty-five-minute-long drum solo lost audience interest quickly, but twenty-five one-minute-long songs spaced throughout a set help to better maintain a rousing pace.

At one point during the show, in the middle of a boisterous "Mass of Our Lost," Wolf jumped off the stage and into the front row of the screaming audience. Most of the crowd in the first dozen rows surged forward in order to nab Wolf, grabbing at him and trying to shake his hand. The ushers tried to keep people back, but were trampled in the crush. Wolf then leaped back on the stage, his clothes hanging on his body in tatters, and continued the song.

After a hasty costume change, Wolf flew back out front and mentioned the group's tenth anniversary. "It sure is great to be back home," he said to the wildly cheering audience. (Please turn to page 7)