

# Movie Review

## 'U23D'

I've never been on stage with U2 before, but watching this movie with some strange glasses on for the 3D effects, it was just like I was right out there with the lads, with tens of thousands screaming fans all around us. Maybe that's just my ego but that's how it felt. At the very least, sitting there in the cinema with the surround-sound made it feel as if you were really there. I'm still not sure if the screaming of the fans was just from the concert or if it was also from the people in the cinema. I'm thinking it was the former but you were never really sure while sitting through this amazing experience.

U2 have come a long way from the days of Red Rocks and Sunday Bloody Sunday. 25 years later they've still got 'it'. Red Rocks was the concert that made U2 legendary as live performers. I would be surprised if there has ever been any band in history who has had the energy and the electricity of U2 playing live. I remember thinking when I first heard them as a teenager that they were the only band I knew who were better live than in the studio.

Many people over the years have remarked that a U2 concert feels like something akin to a spiritual experience. That's a big call, but sitting in the Imax cinema this night was pretty amazing. There is something about U2's outward looking, anti-narcissistic nature of their music that makes it so attractive. That plus the passion, energy and Irish spiritual rage that they bring to their music. They are still as passionate about making the world a better place as they were when they started out as teenagers in the late 1970s. Bono in particular is also just as passionate about faith having a central role in life. Their attraction also goes to the nature of who they are as individuals and their obvious fondness for each other as friends, a fondness that has remained after so many long hard years on the road together. This was beautifully shown during 'Where the Streets Have No Name' when Bono sang "I want to go there with you" while gently running his hand down Adam Clayton's face, then planting a big kiss on him. Adam is then shown beaming as he plies his talents on his bass guitar.

What this performance showed me as well as that this is not a band that struts, in the sense that the typical rock star struts. That may sound just the opposite of how Bono comes across to many people, but his is the ultimate stage act. Bono is the supreme entertainer, an actor and a poet of the highest calibre. So much of a U2 show is both symbolic and spontaneous at the same time. What stood out to me this night was that before the movie started, we saw shorts to a similar 3D film of a Rolling Stones concert, and the ego and 'look-at-me' strutting of Mick and Keith was a stark contrast to the sheer enjoyment of playing to their fans that exudes from the Edge and Adam Clayton, not to mention Bono himself. And let's not leave Larry out of this. He still beats those drums as hard as he ever did.

So many U2 songs have become anthems over the years, and hearing them performed live just adds to their legend. I can't count how many times I've heard 'Where the Streets Have No Name' live and been taken to a different place by the unbridled passion of the song, Bono's singing, Edge's guitar, the lights, and the crowd just going off. Most of this movie was filmed during a concert in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and those Latin Americans know how to party. People of that part of the world are known for their passion for life and this concert was no exception. At one stage the crowd seemed to be moving as one as the band had them wrapped around their finger.

Another song that deserves a special mention was the performance of Miss Sarajevo, with Bono singing the part normally reserved for the late Luciano Pavarotti, and his obvious singing ability reaching new heights as he belted out the operatic tones of the famous tenor who would have been proud of his performance. The Argentinian crowd were suitably impressed, clapping at this part of the song as if at an opera and not at a rock 'n' roll performance of the biggest band in the world.

U23D is a new addition to add to the annals of rock 'n' roll recordings. If you're a fan of this amazing band, you will not be disappointed. And if you're a music fan in general, I have no doubt that this performance will leave you as awed as Bono was by the response of the crowd as they made their way off the stage to the applause and acclamation of the masses.

*by Nils von Kalm*  
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