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Into The Heart: The Stories Behind Every U2 Song



Synopsis

Into the Heart examines the behind-the-scenes influences that shaped U2's internationally popular and critically acclaimed music. Included are original and revealing interviews with band members and the key people close to U2. The band's rich cultural and social context is fully explored, providing a colorful backdrop to the songs. Into the Heart traces U2's meteoric rise from the early days of their career with Boy, their first album, to the spanning success of The Joshua Tree, Rattle and Hum, Achtung Baby, and Pop. U2 is a group that has become a world-class rock 'n' roll band; a band that continues to invent themselves and is not afraid to take chances with their craft; as well as make a unique impact in the world of music with their raw, emotional energy. This edition includes over 100 black and white and color photos, provides a complete chronology and discography, and covers the band's newest CD, All That You Can't Leave Behind. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

Niall Stokes is the founder and Editor of Hot Press, Ireland's bible of rock 'n' roll and current affairs. He is the Editor of two best-selling books on U2, The U2 File and U2: Three Chords And the Truth A musician and songwriter, his band The Brothers released an acclaimed album Torch in 1992. A regular contributor to radio and television in Ireland and abroad, in 1993 he was appointed Chairperson of the Independent Radio and Television Commission --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I really enjoyed U2 Into the Heart - (the stories behind every song) for several of reasons. First, I learned about Bono's songwriting process, or lack of, and how the themes for the songs came together. Second, the book covers every song up through All That You Can't Leave Behind, including covers, B-sides, etc. in the appendix. The chronology and discography are useful, and the book is packed with cool pictures. Many of the song stories contain snippets of interviews with the band members and producers, so you get different viewpoints on specific songs and records in general. It was interesting to read how things evolved, and how some songs were passed through different hands for polishing. If that's what you expect, then it's a pretty good fan capsule. There are pieces of band history and relationships presented, but that part mostly skims the surface. My main knock on the book is that Niall Stokes is such an insider with the group, or a fan, that he is unable to offer more critical analysis on some of the tunes. To read here, nearly every song is a masterpiece. If you take a step back you see repetitive structures in the early works, mixed themes in even the best songs (from mud huts in Central America to a grimy city in Bullet The Blue Sky) and pieces from Zooropa and Pop that don't really stand the test of time. Don't get me wrong, U2 is one of my favorite bands, and they have produced an outstanding catalog of songs, but one needs to be more objective in examining the body of work.

U2 is one of those bands that spans the decades, changing at times but never really losing their original soul. Each album, in my opinion, is straight U2. Some claim that the Zooropa and Pop albums are lesser works or non-U2 exploratory efforts. Absolutely wrong. Most of the people that have said just that have _never_ listened to them. Just the other day a friend who loves U2 said 'I've never listened to Pop because it doesn't sound like Joshua Tree or All that You Can Leave Behind'. Ahh, but it does. Listen closer. This book does an excellent job in telling the stories of all the U2 songs and how they were developed... and they have similar conceptual roots. Buy it and then buy the albums you don't have like POP and Zooropa!!! Andrew YoungbioBridges, LLC

Into The Heart is an impressive look into the stories behind each and every U2 song from Boy to Pop. Writer Niall Stokes gets right down to brass tacks and relates the band's own accounts about such classics as "Sunday Bloody Sunday", "Bad", "With Or Without You", "One" and all the rest. The book gives a chronological account of all their recording sessions and includes b-sides, unreleased tracks, movie songs and songs that were released on albums like Sun City. The book is has a nice large size and is loaded with great pictures. Any fan of U2 should have this book in their collection.

This is a must for all U2 fans. It's great to understand what all the songs mean.

It's a scene familiar to any aficionado of musical bio-pics: at some point, one of the characters in the film will say something that incorporates a song title or a bit of the lyrics of the artist in question, as a kind of wink to the audience (examples: the "stu sutcliffe" character in BACKBEAT telling his doctor he's been working "eight days a week," Benny's music teacher in THE BENNY GOODMAN STORY crying out "don't be that way!", etc.). There are two responses to this sort of winking-- 1) You think it's hokey and squirm in your seat or 2) You think it's cute and feel pleasure at getting the joke. If you fall into category two, you will probably enjoy INTO THE HEART, which is full of such passages (Bono is said to be "ready for what's next," the band is "even better than the real thing," etc.). If, like me, you fall into the first category, you'll probably see the book as a missed opportunity. This is a wonderful idea for a book, and it starts off promisingly, with an introduction full of amusing anecdotes and thoughtful contextualization (you have to respect a writer who sees connections between the band's music and the work of Paul Auster, for instance). But as Stokes moves from album to album, song to song, a sense of disappointment slowly descends-- he seems caught between seeing the tunes as mere pop ephemera (there's a constant resistance to interpretation) and wanting to place the band in a tradition of great Irish artists (Wilde is one touchstone mentioned). Fine, U2 *does* embody such seeming contradictions ("right in the middle of a contradiction, that's the place to be," Bono quotes Sam Shepard at one point), but Stokes, unlike his subjects, is unable to make these paradoxes work for him, and the result is a schizo volume that, for all of its author's obvious knowledge of and love for the music, feels like a cheap fanzine. The most useful passages are on POP, an album whose genesis has not received enough attention, and ALL THAT YOU CAN'T LEAVE BEHIND, as Stokes traces out U2's turning back to earlier sounds and impulses after the glorious decadence of the 90s. For anyone interested in U2 -- the songs, the image, the tours and their wider cultural and social meaning-- between BOY and PASSENGERS, Bill Flanagan's U2 at the end of the world is a far funnier, better written, more searching volume (one which Stokes borrows from quite a bit, actually).

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