



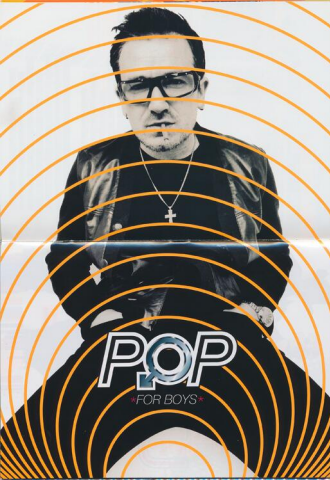
In Praise Of PopMart

POP
FROM THE PLANET

There is a psychological syndrome – well documented – called “The Majestic Swan”. The sufferer or sufferers appear on the surface, serene, untroubled. Yet, underneath the waterline, they’re peddling like crazy – webbed feet akimbo – just to keep afloat.

For all their status as the world’s biggest, coolest rock band, this is how U2 fell on April 25, 1997, with their latest album, the brilliant and daring Pop, barely (make that “not quite”) in the can, they had tumbled into rehearsals for a 5-month intercontinental jaunt – all pre-booked – with a truck bag of intimidating technology to master.

All this, and the shadow of 1992-93’s Zoo TV tour – the most spectacular rock extravaganza heretofore staged – loomed. To this end, in terms of pure production design, the band gussied staging supreme Willie Williams had already outdone themselves. A 170ft by 56ft LED screen comprising 156,000 pixels barfed technicolor images that juxtaposed Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and a supersized belly dancer.



POP

FOR BOYS


The image is the cover of the U2 album *MOFO*. It features the four band members: Bono in the foreground wearing sunglasses and a dark, patterned jacket; The Edge in the background on the left wearing sunglasses and a black shirt; Adam Clayton in the background on the right wearing a black cowboy hat and a black shirt; and Larry Mullen Jr. in the background on the far right wearing sunglasses and a black shirt. The background is a light blue and white pattern of concentric circles and a grid. The title "U2 *MOFO*" is written in large, stylized red and blue letters across the middle. At the bottom, there is a colorful, multi-colored bar.

U2 *MOFO*

A 10ft cocktail stick skewered an enormous faux-olive, and 50ft lemon-cum-mirrorball. Above it all arched a golden parabola cradling a conspicuous shopping basket. The presentation satirised global consumer culture as much as it wondered at it. The colour, the fan, and the euphoric glitter suited the Pop album's sonic architecture – its cutting-edge exploration of dance music culture, of funk and disco and house – and seemed to solve the nagging problem of how U2 could once again project themselves in stadiums, on that enormous scale, without appearing to take themselves too seriously. As Bono bubbled excitedly, "Our job is to blow our own minds, as well as everyone else's."

Job done, it seemed, though questions remained, could U2's historical content – heartfelt, honest, serious – learn to thrive within PopMart's gaudy superstructure? And beyond that, would the bloody thing actually work? Cut to: April 25, 1997 and the Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas.

"I have a very vivid memory of what it was like," the normally phlegmatic Adam Clayton would eventually tell



your writer: "I remember opening with Molo and being so aware of... extreme fear. My whole body was caked in sweat. And there was this feeling of having no strength in any part of my body... I have to say that the whole first week was like that, every night."

Beneath the waterline, the flippers were flailing. U2 were operating without a safety net and yet... read the reviews today (in Spin, Rolling Stone, The LA Times) and baring a little reported trouble with Staring At The Sun, we find nothing but the customary awe and exhilaration. U2 had taken a risk and thrown a six, and after a shaky beginning quickly grew to enjoy the party they had thrown.

POP

FOR CLUBBERS



*POP

By the time they took the stage at the Foro Sol Autotransmex, Mexico City, on December 3, 1997, for the show immortalised on this DVD, they'd already toured Europe and North America twice. Perhaps most importantly, they'd taken the circus to dirt-poor, war-torn Sarajevo and proved to themselves that the nuances of irony and pop culture dialectic immanent in the PopMart presentation, had not been considered, rather than overpowered what it was, and is, that 502 do best.

In fact there are moments when this Mexico show simply takes the breath away. The band's arrival, over the scarp-tingling, raved-up remix of M's Pop Muzik – escorted like bowers through the arena by authentically shit-scared bouncers (there had been trouble the previous day with the local political dynasty, Sono's typically rough-and-ready way with the local lingo ["Muchos huevos!" he exclaims, cupping the second Hewson crotch]. Brilliant readjustments of familiar songs (clipped, light-fingered funk for Five's Better Than The Real Thing; a Happy Mondays twigger mixed into Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me), Edge's exquisite solo rendering of Sunday Bloody Sunday) suddenly stripped of troublesome, ambiguous machismo. The revelation of Where The Streets Have No Name – complete with Dr Who-on-pills visuals – as the greatest

There are moments when this Mexico show simply takes the breath away. The band's arrival, over the scarp-tingling, raved-up remix of M's Pop Muzik.



Pop Muzik.

It (the Lemon) probably won't get you to work and back. But it could make someone a fantastic cocktail bar.

Balearic rave track ever. The bit where the crowd takes up the refrain of *Pride (In The Name Of Love)* and Bono's eyes fill up.

And of course... the moment that is burned into the memory of anyone lucky enough to have seen U2 live between April '77 and March '78, the emergence of the quartet for the encore, alighting from the spangling Lemon like geyser-acting robots from a space capsule, to launch into the rit-matching big beat hoochie that is *Discothèque*. Knowing homage to Spinal Tap, inspired snorts of laughter-out-loud silliness, and simply gobsmacking coup de théâtre all rolled into one. "The Lemon" has entered the history of rock show gamcrackery alongside Black Sabbath's *Gonzo* and The Stones' inflatable penis, and knocked them all into a cocked hat. And if you'd ever wondered where that Lemon is now, Edge has some breaking news.

"Our manager has been handling the Lemon issue," he tells me. "At one point I believe he was trying to sell it to the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas. That would have been perfect. As a vehicle I'm afraid it has its limitations - it probably wouldn't get you to work and back. But it could make someone a fantastic cocktail bar."

A fitting end for an icon with intoxicating powers.

POP

• FOR FIZZ •

All great women have an ego, and so does the DJ. The extra footage you'll see here is from Rotterdam's Frynsord Stadium on the evening of July 10, 1997. And what it lacks in the slender praise of David Byrne's *Slanted Manoeuvres* film, it gains in up-close emotional detail.

Above all, I direct you to the band's performance of "Please," one of the Pop album's underused tracks, and the best example — perhaps on all these discs — of U2's simple power. A song about history-busting Jews of religious wars sung in aching, almost apologetic high register by a man with a crew cut and a red T-shirt. He Fly or Microbial Planet or MacPhisto, or any of Byrne's late theatrical constructions. And even more begging for peace.

And we could all use a bit of that right now.

© 2007 Barry Eckstein, HQJJD magazine

POP
FOR GIRLS





Directed by
Produced by
Executive Producer
Co-Producers
Associate Producer
Lighting Designer
Stage Design/Crew
Lighting Director
Sound Engineer
Sound Supervisors

David Mallet
Rod O'Hanra
Paul McGuinness
Simon Draper
Shelia Roche
Alan Bradley
Willie Williams
Bruce Ramsay
Joe O'Hanra
Hood and Woods 2

2010 Production Manager
2010 Production Coordinator
2010 Project Director
2010 Project Manager

Tara Mullin
Suzie McGrath
Steve Matthews
Candice Rutland

DVD Designed, Authored and Produced by Abbey Road Interactive

Original Stereo Sound Mix
Audio Consultant and
Quality Control
S. I. Surround Sound Mix
Assisted by
S. I. Mix Consultant
Stereo Sound Mastering

Chris Potter at Metropolis Studios, London
Cheryl Shephard at Parlophone Productions Inc.

Paul Hill of Pop Sound, Seattle, WA
Jason Taylor
Michael Kruyev
Aimee Asante at Bernie Grundman Mastering,
Hollywood

Stills/photography design
Photography

Shaughn McCreath, FourFiveCreative, Dublin
Robertson Stewart/Robert, Dublin, Anton Corbijn,
Kevin Maize, Elliot Roberts, Anja Grover, Kevin Davies
Dorey Dickinson, *MOJO* magazine

Website artist

All titles written by U2 and published by Universal Music Publishing International (UK) except:

"New World" - Music World, 4800 Music Publishing (2012), licensed under license by Warner Records Ltd,
subsidiary of Music Collection International and Music World
"Save It Like You Save Me" - MusicCollection/UMI, Warner Records Publishing Corp. with Lightning Music Inc.
2011 and Great Britain, Music World (2012)
"The Ground Beneath My Feet" - U2 Music, Inc. (2012)
"No Kinks" - Traditional, Public Domain
"All Kinds of Everything" - Smith/Deery, U2 Music Publishing Ltd.

Featuring interactive content on the art of Rock. Design © The Studio of Scott Searcy

Published in partnership with U2 Records, with the permission of the artist. "Where Do I Belong?"
"When Love Takes Over" "Black & White" "The Show" © U2 Records, all rights reserved.