

Arts & Entertainment

U2 concert movie a notch above the norm

Rattle and Hum ★★★ ½
Famous Players Paramount

review by Paul Sparrow-Clarke

Near the end of this movie, Bono introduces the song "Sunday Bloody Sunday" by dedicating it to the people who died in the bombing of a Remembrance Day parade in Northern Ireland. In the middle of the song he delivers an acidic, angry eulogy about the troubles in that beleaguered country: "... where's the glory in gunning down a man in front of his wife and children?" This is one of the intense moments that raises *Rattle and Hum* a notch above most other concert movies. Director and editor Phil Joanou (a Steven Spielberg protege) has done a commendable job of capturing the exhilaration of a rock concert. He doesn't merely film the performance, he draws you into it with some impressive camera work. The excellent cinematography also adds a lot to this film, which is part black-and-white and part colour.

The film is mainly made up of concert footage from U2's North American tour, along with a smattering of documentary-type footage consisting of studio sessions (including a scene from Sun Studios, Elvis' recording studios), interviews with the band members, etc. It is commendable that the director has tried to capture the human side of the band, including the band working out "All Along the Watchtower" just five minutes before they go on

stage for the free San Francisco concert. There is a hilarious attempt at interviewing the band at the beginning of the movie; none of them can keep a straight face whilst Adam Clayton tries in vain to explain what the film is about. All of the documentary footage in the movie is generally good.

The music mainly comes from the latter part of U2's career, the earliest song being the aforementioned "Sunday Bloody Sunday". There is a lot of music from *The Joshua Tree*, including a surprisingly gutsy version of "Exit". "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" is played in a church in Harlem, with a gospel choir providing backing vocals. It is not exactly the same track as on the album *Rattle and Hum*, but it is the same sort of arrangement. I personally dislike this new version of the

There is a hilarious attempt at interviewing the band...

song and consequently wasn't moved by the movie version either.

All of the other live tracks on the album are in the movie, the most outstanding being "Bullet the Blue Sky" (ironically preceded by the "Star Spangled Banner") and "Silver and Gold." U2's contribution to the "Sun City" album. The music in this



U2: left to right, Larry Mullen, Jr. (drums), Adam Clayton (bass), The Edge (guitar, piano, vocals) and Bono (vocals, guitar).

movie is uniformly excellent, thanks to the power and inspired passion of U2's performance. These guys genuinely care about their music, and actually have something to say (rare in the music business today).

For my money, the great strength of U2 is that, like classic gangs of the past, they are truly a unit. Everybody contributes something important to the music, from Bono's powerful vocals to the extraordinary guitar of the Edge to the hard-driving rhythm section provided by Larry Mullen Jr. and Adam Clayton. This, combined with the intelligence of the lyrics, puts their music streets ahead of most of the drivel you hear on commercial radio. I should also mention that the impact of the music is aided immeasurably by the excellent sound reproduction provided by the new "SpectralRecording" sound system

in the Paramount.

Although *Rattle and Hum* is frequently stunning visually and musically, it has a flaw in that it lacks connecting threads. It is not a record of a single concert like U2's previous movie *Under a Blood Red Sky*; neither is it a record of the recording of the new album; it comes across as being disjointed. Actually, this was the same problem that the Who's movie *The Kids are Alright* suffered from. *Rattle and Hum* probably set out to be a record of U2 at this point in their career, but it needs more of a framework, and thus is not as successful as it could have been. If you're not a U2 fan, I can't predict your reaction to this movie (witness Marc Horton's indifferent review in the *Edmonton Journal*). However, I can say that if you like U2, you will probably love *Rattle and Hum*.

Razorbacks' Dinwoodie show has frenetic energy

Razorbacks/The Pursuit of Happiness
Dinwoodie
Saturday, November 5

review by Kevin Law

"There's only one way to describe tonight, and that's wild!" said the lead singer of the Razorbacks about their tumultuous show at Dinwoodie Saturday.

Indeed. The show could certainly be described as wild, hog-wild in fact, as the Razorbacks ripped into one song after another at breakneck speed, never letting up for a minute (with the exception of a far too long intermission).

This band, that started out playing on the streets of Toronto, was so extremely frenetic on stage Saturday night as to be almost psychotic in their energy. They

The Razorbacks stage antics were just as frantic as their music.

carried on like good old boys, out to have a good time at any cost, with their own special brand of acoustic roots rock.

It took little time to whip the crowd into a frenzy with searing Razorback tunes like "So Much Fun", "All I Need", and "Long Rolling Nights", as well as a scorching version of "Maybelline" and the Who's "My Generation", complete with Pete Townshend guitar-slashing imitation and spitting on stage. If you're getting the idea that these guys were hot, then you obviously weren't there, because these guys were

explosive; they were truly irascible jalepinos of entertainment.

The Razorbacks' stage antics were just as frantic as their music. With sweat flying from their faces, each member of the band seemed to enjoy a particular form of instrument abuse. Lead singer Tony Kenny and Donnie Donohue Cartwright would intermittently swing their guitars in a circle by the guitar neck (much like Roger Daltry used to do with microphones), or sit or stand on them while playing. "Jailhouse". Joe Nyke, meanwhile, twirled his stand-up bass, or stood on it while playing, or lay down on top of it while playing and having another band member stand on him, or he would carry the instrument (as large as himself) on his shoulders around the stage. This is not to mention drummer Don Dekouchey, who abused his minimal snare set simply by playing them with much gusto. Add to this various dropping and kicking of instruments and you have a fairly fun evening at the symphony.

The Razorbacks ended their solid two sets with a barrelhouse version of their hit "It's Saturday Night", in which as many audience members as possible were invited to dance on stage with the band. The two encores after that probably kept the audience from returning home to more serious endeavors, like studying, because they were likely too satisfied and exhausted for anything so mundane.

Opening act The Pursuit of Happiness made a successful return to Edmonton. For Moe Berg, the anorexic boy wonder, national acclaim is beginning to materialize. This band is well rehearsed with smooth harmonies and an infectious hard edged pop sound that warmed up the audience considerably, many of whom expressed their pleasure to Berg at having him back in town.



Two members of the Razorbacks performing their unique brand of instrument abuse at Dinwoodie.

Kevin Law