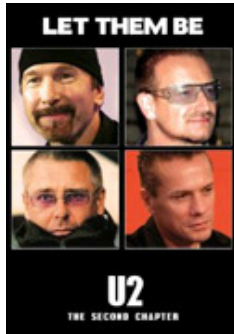


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U2: Let Them Be - The Second Chapter

2010

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Like just about every other teenager in the 80's, when U2 hit the scene in the United States with the release of War, it was something that was played quite a bit, at least it was for me until I discovered heavy metal. After that I soon lost interest in the New Wave scene but I don't think that any of us could anticipate what the future of the band would hold. There aren't many artists from that era that you hear very much about and most that managed to get beyond being a one-hit wonder didn't last into the 90's with the coming of Grunge. When was the last time you heard something from Duran Duran or Cindy Lauper who coincidentally is playing here in Portland at, of all places, the zoo.

Let Them Be: The Second Chapter covers the career of U2 starting at right around 2000 into the present, more or less. As most people know who have followed the band to any degree, they did in fact go from being a huge draw to releasing albums that didn't quite have the same appeal to fans or critics as what they did in the past. As many artists attempt, U2 decided to experiment with their sound which didn't quite go over as they had hoped, but it wouldn't be long until they would shed this new approach and return to their roots to some extent.

This set is actually two different DVD's, the first of these being The Rebirth of Cool: U2 in the Third Millennium. Any interviews with the band that are found here come simply from archived footage from a number of different sources but the main focus is showing the U2 went from being a band who was on the verge of disappearing from the music scene and becoming another band who would play at state fairs, bars, and anywhere else that could possibly get them a small bit of cash to once again being at the top of their game. There are critics featured who give some very good analysis of the sound of the albums, songs, and other concepts, as well as narration. It can be very informative, but as with many documentaries of this nature, having the band not present outside of older interviews does take away quite a bit. It also feels like there needs to be some type of counterbalance as everyone that is featured here are obvious fans who simply don't want to say anything bad about the band. Then again, I suppose you don't want those opposing viewpoints disrupting the flow of everything.

From my perspective, U2 has some songs that I think are composed very well

and utilize layers in very creative ways. Bono occasionally has some lyrics that can be hypnotic and even deep at times, or at the very least quite poetic, but that hasn't always been the case. In their early career, U2 really seemed to have a lot going for them but they fell into the same trap that many artists do which is once they hit a certain level, the music suffered and never quite managed to become nearly as memorable as their early days. My biggest problem with the band these days however is in fact Bono who often comes across as being nothing more than a pompous ass who is so full of himself and determined to impose his will on everyone else that his arrogance immediately rubs me the wrong way. It didn't take me too long to remember this within the first few minutes of this documentary with the quote from Bono of, "We're back – re-applying for the job of the best band in the world." If that doesn't just scream arrogance, I don't know what does.

The second DVD which is included with the set is Achtung Baby: A Classic Album Under Review. As with the other documentary this feature includes critical analysis from music critics but it goes into depth on a great amount of information. This isn't quite the usual review that you might be used to reading online or in magazines, and it's definitely more informative than any of those quick, minute or two segments that you'll catch on any of the news shows. You wouldn't even find this level of detail on any of the music video channels but I guess we actually don't have any of those these days.

I'm certainly not a fan of U2, not by any stretch of the imagination, but those who are will find that there is invaluable information provided by those who have contributed to these releases. Even the most dedicated fan of the band is bound to find there are things they didn't know and will probably be glad that they now have cataloged in their memory. For me however, I'll just follow the unintentional advise of the collection and Let Them Be.

-mike-

DVD Features:

The Rebirth of Cool

Narrated by:

Nicky Bradbury

Featuring:

Lucy O'Brien

Paul Gambaccini

Simon Osbourne

John Hutayk

Gavin Martin

Johnny Rogan

Mat Snow

John Street

Special Features:

The Millennium Tours

The Rebirth of Cool Interactive Challenge

Contributors Biographies

DVD Features:

Achtung Baby: A Classic Album Under Review

Narrated by:

Stan Jones

Featuring:

Mark Wrathakk

Angus Batey

Nigel Williamson

Stuart Ballie

Paul Gambaccini

Mat Snow

Andrew Mueller

Special Features:

Extended Interviews

Contributor Biographies: The Stories Behind the DVD's Experts

The Hardest Interactive U2 Quiz in the World Ever