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"A SINISTER CABAL OF SUPERIOR WRITERS"

REVIEW

DVD Review: *U2 - Achtung Baby: A Classic Album Under Review*

Written by [T. Michael Testi](#)
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During the 1980s U2 had fast become a critically acclaimed band who reached stellar proportions. Due to their puritanical approach to both music and performance their ability to maintain their status was failing. They had fallen into the trap of being defined by a sound that was too American and an approach that was too stadium.

Their album *The Joshua Tree*, which won the album of the year award at the Grammys in 1987, put them over the top, but they soon found that when you are at the top the only way to go is down. By the time of their next release *Rattle and Hum*, which was released simultaneously with a documentary of the same name, they had become redundant. The album received negative reviews from both film and music critics alike.

U2 – Achtung Baby: A Classic Album Under Review takes us from the earliest beginnings of U2's formation in Dublin, Ireland, through their early albums — *Boy*, *War*, *October*, and *The Unforgettable Fire* — into their career-changing performance at Live Aid in 1985.

The Joshua Tree began as an exploration of the American roots of their music. After being prompted by Bob Dylan they looked to the heartland of American music for the refinement of their musical style. By the time of *Rattle and Hum*, they were acting like pompous fools. On December 31 1989 they announced to the world via a Dublin concert that they would be going away for a while.

Using music and video clips, this DVD shows the rise and decline of the band and subsequent process of re-invention through the creation of the album *Achtung Baby*.

The film features Stuart Bailie, rock journalist and documentary filmmaker, Mark Wrathall, the author of *U2 And Philosophy*, Paul Gambaccini, music expert and radio DJ, Mat Snow, ex-*Mojo* editor, Nigel Williamson, *Uncut* magazine's contributing editor, and Andrew Mueller from *Time Out*.

The DVD contains footage of and comment on U2's musical influences at this pivotal time in their career. The extras contain extended interviews as well as more in depth insight from the panel of experts. There is a digital quiz to test your U2 knowledge as well as a "Beyond DVD" section.

As with the other *Under Review* titles I have seen, this was not authorized by U2, their record label or their management, so they can pretty much call it as they see it. I highly recommend this for the U2 fan, the lover of music history, or anyone who wants more insight into the band and the creation of this monumental piece of rock history.

T. Michael Testi is the curator of the [PhotographyToday.Net](#) website, a photographer, writer, software developer and ardent fantasy football fan. He also blogs at [PhotographyTodayNet](#) and at [All This and Everything Else](#)

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