

## U2: Rattle and Hum ★★★

---

**Year of Release:** 1988

Review by Randy Parker

**Country:** USA

**Verdict:** See It

---

Any U2 fan will tell you that nothing compares to experiencing the band live in concert; however, seeing their movie *Rattle and Hum* on a big screen in blaring Dolby stereo surround comes awfully close. For those of you who missed 1987's Joshua Tree tour, *Rattle and Hum* is your chance to see and hear what you missed. The movie, which contains about 70% concert and 30% documentary footage, follows the band during its U.S. Joshua Tree concert tour.

For U2 fans, like myself, *Rattle and Hum* is a real treat. The movie provides a rare up-close view of the band both on and off the concert stage. U2 is one of the most exciting live bands performing rock today, and *Rattle and Hum* captures the passion they bring to their music and the excitement of their concerts.

Steven Spielberg protégé Phil Joanou, whose first feature film was *Three O'Clock High*, directed *Rattle and Hum*. Joanou probably deserves almost as much credit for the film's impact as does the band itself. Except for about 20 minutes of color footage, Joanou beautifully shot *Rattle and Hum* in dramatic black and white film, giving the movie an artistic and aesthetic look. More significant, however, is Joanou's brilliant editing of the film. Most of the movie is footage shot at U2 concerts across the country, but Joanou also intersperses documentary footage throughout *Rattle and Hum*.

He wisely chose to insert the documentary sequences in between live songs, rather than in the middle of them, thereby preserving the power and momentum of the band's live performances. By avoiding gratuitous shots of the crowd, concentrating mostly on the band itself, and constantly varying the camera angles and shot distances, Joanou keeps the concert footage exciting and stimulating.

*Rattle and Hum* contains numerous high points and special moments—so many, in fact, that I can mention only a few. Of course, with U2's feverish and passionate energy on stage, all of the concert footage in the film is electrifying. I generally enjoyed the documentary footage as well. It includes the band traveling to Harlem to record a powerful gospel version of "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" in a church with a full choir. They also take a private tour of Graceland and record "Angel of Harlem" at the legendary Sun Studios in Memphis. The members of U2 seem to have enjoyed making *Rattle and Hum*, and they don't take themselves too seriously, as they are often prone to do—for example, during 1987's "Stop the Traffic" graffiti scandal at Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco. Although a few of the documentary sequences seem extraneous, most of them complement the live concert footage very well. *Rattle and Hum* is a must-see for U2 fans.