

U2's Bono performs in the Olympic Stadium in Rome on the "Vertigo 2005" tour. Andreas Solaro | Getty Images

# When U2 played Wash U too



Youthful U2 members (from left) the Edge, Bono and Larry Mullen perform in support of the band's first album, "Boy" (1980).

## U2 setlist

Graham Chapel, April 7, 1988  
The Ocean  
11 O'Clock Tick Tock  
I Will Follow  
An Cat Dubh  
Into the Heart  
Another Time, Another Place  
Cry/Electric Co.  
Things to Make and Do  
Stories for Boys  
Boy-Girl  
Out of Control

Encore:  
A Day Without Me  
11 O'Clock Tick Tock  
The Ocean  
I Will Follow

## U2 With Kanye West

When: 7:30 p.m.  
Wednesday

Where: Savvis Center,  
1401 Clark Avenue

How much: Sold out

More info:  
314-421-4400,  
618-222-2900 or  
www.ticketmaster.com

By Daniel Durchholz  
SPECIAL TO THE POST-DISPATCH

Not many rock bands stick around for a quarter-century, and the ones that do aren't always eager to acknowledge, much less revisit, their humble beginnings.

But on U2's "Vertigo 2005" tour, lead singer Bono has been pausing to reflect on the band's first two trips to America in 1980 and '81. From the stage, he's been naming the venues they played back then and thanking the fans who have stuck with them throughout the years.

Among the list of clubs are places like Boston's Paradise, Washington's Bayou Club, Chicago's Park West and Kansas City's Uptown Theater.

In St. Louis, on the other hand, U2's first performance — on April 7, 1981 — was held at an unlikely venue: Graham Chapel on the campus of Washington University.

### "A miniature Van Morrison"

Whether Bono recalls anything about that show will remain unknown until (or unless) he says something about it at Savvis Center on Wednesday night.

But others who were there remember plenty.

"It was the perfect match between artist and venue," says Alex Weir, who at the time was a student at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and attended the show with friends. "The idea of U2 playing in an old stone church was perfect: an ideal fit."

"Bono had a tremendous presence," says Tom Lunt, who lives in Chicago and is a partner in the Numero Group, a record label. "But I remember thinking he looked like a goat. He looked like a goat-man. There was something about him that was chimerical, you

know? He kept leaping up and down and kicking his knees up, like a miniature Van Morrison."

"They were definitely what you would call seasoned performers already," recalls Steve Scariano, who watched the show from Graham Chapel's balcony. "But they were still thought of as an underground band, still breaking through. You didn't know that they were going to sell millions of records at that point. I just remember them being really, really good. And Bono was a great frontman."

A Post-Dispatch reporter recalls replacing Bono on lead vocal during a 1982 U2 concert. F4

Writers reminisce about memorable early encounters with future musical stars. F3

PLEASE SEE U2 | F4



## Irish rockers played Graham Chapel in '81

At the time, rock music was in a strange place, still dominated by the dinosaur acts of the '60s and '70s, but with the post-punk/new wave/MTV-bred bands on the rise.

"I remember it being a really fallow time in music right then," Lunt says. "It was kind of during that Pat Benatar-Kenny Loggins period."

Yet St. Louis had been primed for bands like U2, if not by radio, then by a network of clubs and fans and fanzines such as the late, lamented *Jet Lag*, eager to find something new and exciting.

"We had a few good years, from '78 on, of fairly good new-wave bands coming through town," Scariano says. "Mississippi Nights had most of them, and the old Stages, across the river, had some of them, too. There was also Night Moves (where U2 played its second St. Louis show, on Feb. 19, 1982).

"I saw Talking Heads at Mississippi Nights, (former New York Doll) David Johansen and the Boomtown Rats, all in that two- or three-year span. The Pretenders and the English Beat on their first tour played at Night Moves. And there were lesser acts coming through town, too. There was nobody playing that stuff on the radio, but the clubs were taking a chance on them. So we were used to seeing that stuff that was being called new wave, and U2 fell under that umbrella."

U2 may have made some life-long fans at that Graham Chapel show, but Lunt (who has come around since) says he didn't care for them at the time.

"Right around then I saw the band Magazine, and I remember thinking that, of the two, they were the more deserving, more adventurous act, at least in terms of, you know, plumbing the epic depths of spirituality. I remember walking out of the U2 show and saying to (a friend), 'Those guys aren't going to get very far on four chords.'"

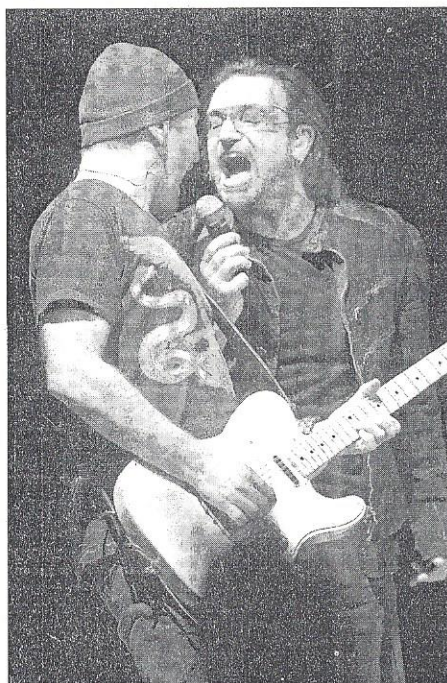
It wasn't the Graham Chapel show, but rather U2's Night Moves appearance that ticked off Tony Renner, who attended both shows.

"Bono said, 'Oh, this is so much nicer than the place we played last year.' Now, I'm sure that was true of every other place they played on that tour, St. Louis excepted. But I thought, 'No, you were in Graham Chapel last year, with a huge stained-glass window behind you.'"

"That made me mad. He was doing stage patter. I thought, 'You're no better than the rest of them.' I don't dislike them now, but if Bono hadn't said that ridiculous thing, maybe I wouldn't have a grudge. It doesn't take much in rock 'n' roll."

### "Super-super nice guys"

When U2 hit town, it was the job of Tony Marfisi, a promotions and marketing rep for re-



The Edge and Bono perform in Montreal last month. Francois Roy | The Associated Press

cord distributor WEA, to shepherd the band members to record stores and radio stations to help grease the wheels for sales and airplay.

"(The band's debut album) 'Boy' had just come out," Marfisi recalls. "They were so low-key back then. They were still really, really young, like 20 or 21 years old. They were just boys from Ireland, doing their first tour of America and learning about the music business."

"But the show was remarkable. They were just monsters. The thing I remember most, though, is just hanging out with them. I think we went to Blueberry Hill and had a few pints of Guinness."

Scariano happened to be working at Streetside Records in Webster Groves when Marfisi brought them in.

"I remember they were super-super nice guys, and they had this glint in their eyes," Scariano says. "You could tell they couldn't believe any of this was happening to them. They had this vibe that said, 'Pinch me, am I dreaming?' They were just ecstatic to be in America."

As for the show itself, U2 played a set of a dozen songs and then returned for an encore. But rather than play a few cover tunes or songs they hadn't done already, they simply repeated three tunes from earlier in the evening.

"I've never seen anybody do that," Weir says. "The thing is, it didn't detract at all. Some people in the crowd were grumbling

about it, but it didn't bother me a bit. It's still one of the best shows I've ever seen."

Afterward, the band hung out and mixed with fans. Renner recalls, "I asked a girl I knew if she wanted to go backstage. She was a cute girl, of course, so she got to talk to Bono, and I wound up with the bass player or drummer. I didn't really have anything to say to him."

Weir says, "Bono and a couple of other people walked just a few feet in front of us. Nobody mobbed them. They just looked like fans. But I remember them walking by like it was no big deal."

"In spite of that, a lot of us could sense from that show that they were going to be huge and that we would never see them in such an ideal place again. And that's more or less what happened."