

Pop: Album fails to top past releases

■ Continued from Page 5

In other words, the album *sounds* good.

But, although there is not one bad song on this album, the tracks lack the energy and emotion of U2's past releases. Like *The Joshua Tree*, which was released ten years ago, it consists of low-key, mellow songs that change pace only to get slower. Unlike *The Joshua Tree*, *Pop* lacks the raw emotion that made the 1987 album worth listening to.

Pop begins with the well-known track "Discotheque," of which several versions were released before the album. This song is the most mainstream and least unique track on the album; however, it is also the most energetic and dynamic. Fade-in distortions lead to a driving bass and

a fairly danceable beat, and interesting sound effects supplement the catchy tune.

The album declines from there. With each succeeding track the album becomes less dynamic until the songs begin to blend together into one long jumble of distorted monotony. "Gone," the beginning of which has a Smashing Pumpkins feel, "Miami" and "The Playboy Mansion" are prime examples of this.

One song that stands out is "If God Will Send His Angels," an easy ballad with soulful lyrics. This song comes closer than any other on *Pop* to the raw emotion found in "One" and "With Or Without You," but it still doesn't quite have the intensity that made these songs great.

Toward the end of the album,

U2 actually begins to take on a dark, despairing sound. "Wake Up Dead Man," the last track on *Pop*, weds this dark sound with desperate, soul-searching lyrics. "Jesus, Jesus help me/I'm alone in this world/And a fucked up world it is too," Bono sings, ending the album on a depressing note.

Because of the band's well-publicized world tour, *Pop* will probably sell far more copies than *Zooropa's* seven million. All the same, the uninspiring album falls short of the incredible music of which U2 has been capable in the past. Fans of the Irish rock band should go ahead and pick up *Pop* anyway; it is good, even if it isn't great, and it's definitely worth having. But it isn't much of an improvement over past releases.



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U2 has consisted of the same four members since its inception in 1978.

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