

MUSIC REVIEWS

PULSE EDITOR: MONICA HANDE

U2's latest release shouldn't be left behind

■ U2's 10th LP proves more sophisticated and less in-your-face than their earlier albums



U2 'All That You Can't Leave Behind'

Interscope

★★★★☆

By Rebecca Wilson
Oregon Daily Emerald

Twenty years ago, four scrappy hooligans from Dublin's urban wasteland released an album called "Boy"; an abrasive, political debut full of adolescent rants and religious confusion. There was even some Gaelic thrown in. You could tell

they were trying to be The Clash. It was 1980, after all.

In the proceeding years, the young band developed and showed they could retain their political conscience and even sell a few albums along the way.

And now, with the release of their 10th LP entitled "All That You Can't Leave Behind," U2 has proved once and for all that they can evolve almost as fast as Microsoft and far more successfully than Madonna.

In a characteristic move, the latest album, released Oct. 31, is vastly different from earlier efforts. In the weeks (OK, months) leading up to the album's long-delayed release, the word on the street was that the album would feature a stripped-down sound and a back-to-basics theme. Fans eagerly awaited the release of another "Joshua Tree" or "Achtung Baby."

Fools.

About the only thing that is stripped down about this album is the cover art. "All That You Can't Leave Behind" sounds nothing like the rock classics of the late '80s or even the band's more recent projects. But if you hated the 1997 electronic dance opus that was "Pop," be sure to check out this gem of an album for a listening experience like no other.

The album marks the reappearance of the production dream-duo of Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois, last heard in 1991 on "Achtung Baby." The complex layers of sound form thick, sensual, energetic rock; certainly not stripped down or simplified. The music definitely isn't for the lazy listener — true appreciation demands full aural attention. Eno and Lanois' collective genius can be felt in every musical nook

and cranny, from the delicate strains of the mellotron — a first for U2 — on the intro to "Kite" to the swirling throb of the album's first single, "Beautiful Day."

But even if this album doesn't sound like any of its predecessors, it is still uniquely and unmistakably U2. Look for "Elevation," the energetic highlight of the album, which is reminiscent of "The Fly." And guitarist The Edge's trademark guitar chime rings clearly on "Walk On."

Frontman Bono's lyrics are as provoking as ever on the majority of tunes, such as "Beautiful Day," which celebrates Jubilee 2000, a campaign to forgive the debts of developing countries: "See the Bedouin fires at night/See the oil fields at first light/See the bird with a leaf in her mouth." But some of the songs' words fall short, such as those on "Wild Honey": "In the days/When



we were swinging from the trees/I was a monkey." But even with a few lyrical lapses, Bono drives his words home with his powerful voice and familiar falsetto.

So don't listen to the people who are disappointed that "All That You Can't Leave Behind" didn't actually mark a return to the anthems of the mid-'80s. The album features top-notch songwriting, sophisticated production and a lovely listening experience.

New release in a jam: King Black Acid tries to go pop

■ King Black Acid and the Starseed Transmission is fence-sitting between a rock and a pop place



King Black Acid 'Loves a Love Song'

Cavity Search

★★☆☆☆

By Josh Ryneal
Oregon Daily Emerald

King Black Acid and the Wombstar Orchestra released their first al-

bum, "Wombstar Sessions," in 1995, and the Northwest music scene was lulled into a druggy trance. Running over an hour but only containing three songs, "Wombstar Sessions" was recorded off of a largely improvised set at Portland's KBOO radio station.

KBA and the Wombstar Orchestra decided to go their separate ways in 1997, after two more albums, and those who had fallen in love with the band's transcendental space jams were disappointed.

But they soon had reason to rejoice when King Black Acid was resurrected in 1998. Their newest incarnation, King Black Acid and the Starseed Transmission, has just released their

newest album, "Loves A Long Song," an offhand reference to the band's penchant for extremely extended improvised jams.

However, this album is a departure from KBA's previous efforts. Shorter, tighter songs, linear song progressions, and even (gasp!) pop hooks all make an appearance on "Loves a Long Song."

Frontman Daniel Riddle's voice is a little too airy for the slabs of industrial rock the band lays down, but fans of the band won't really pay attention to that. They want to rock, and KBA lays it down for them in spades.

The deceptively mainstream album opens with "Butterfly

Bomber," a somewhat successful modern-rock songwriting effort that features a lulling guitar hook that morphs into a buzzing noise attack. The band brings back echoes of Pink Floyd with "Kiss the Beast," not only with their psychedelic imagery but also the vocal effects and echoing guitars.

The album's standout track, "Gentle Collapse (Feels Good)," creates a great atmosphere with its swooping guitars and keyboards. But like many of the songs on the record, it suffers from the malaise of being too long.

KBA has tried to move away from the spaced-out jams of previous albums with "Loves A Long Song,"



but they are stuck somewhere in the middle of being a jam band and a pop band. Die-hard fans will probably be put off by the new KBA pop sensibility, while new listeners probably won't have the patience to sit through the whole album.

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