



U2 360° Tour

Production, Statistics, Biographies

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NOTES ON U2360° TOUR

- U2360° is designer Willie Williams 10th production for U2.
- Mark Fisher serves as the architect on his 6th production for U2.
- The stage design includes a cylindrical video screen
- The band and Williams had discussed ideas for 360-degree stadium set for a number of years. Sketches of a four-legged set were first drawn after a model was built with forks over dinner during the Vertigo Tour 2006.
- The stage is built by the Belgian company, Stageco. The construction of each requires the use of high-pressure and innovative hydraulic systems.
- The steel structure is 90 feet tall with the center pylon reaching 150 feet tall.
- The design can support up to 180 tonnes.
- The steel structure is clad in a fabric originally developed for Formula 1 motor racing. Green in daylight, at night it reflects whatever colour is shone on it.
- The cylindrical video screen is 54 tonnes. When closed the screen is 4,300 square feet, opening to a size of 14,000 square feet.
- The video screen is made up of 1 million pieces (500,000 pixels, 320 000 fasteners, 30,000 cables, 150,000 machined pieces).
- The video screen is broken into segments mounted on a multiple pantograph system, which enables the screen to "open up" or spread apart vertically as an effect during different stages of the concerts.
- U2 first introduced large scale concert video on the ZooTV Tour in 1992.
- The steel structure takes 4 days to build. It takes 12 hours to load in screen, stage and universal production equipment.
- It takes 6 hours for production to dismantle and it takes 48 hours to dismantle and load the steel structure out of the stadium.
- U2 360° introduces the 'in the round' configuration to stadiums – U2 have been playing 360 indoors since the Unforgettable Fire Tour in 1984.

THE GROUNDBREAKING PRODUCTION DESIGN FOR U2 360° TOUR has been several years in development. What the band wanted to know was: can you play outdoor stadium shows 'in the round'? U2's long-time **Show Director Willie Williams** tells the story:

Everything we're doing in designing a show is about finding new and interesting ways to present the music. You have to get inside the minds of the performers and that's easier for me with U2 because I've worked with them for twenty-six years. We can almost finish each other's sentences.

PopMart in 1997 was all outdoors and so the change of canvas to Elevation in 2001, almost all indoors, was a gift. It had been a long time since U2 had played indoors and it was such a powerful experience that it got us thinking about ideas that didn't involve video, about the pure energy in the relationship between band and audience.

Video is always the loudest voice in the room. If you're in a pub where there's a TV on, even if you want to be talking to the person you're with, you still end up staring at the screen. So we decided to rethink playing stadiums with video not being so central. Talking with the band it was clear they wanted to make another quantum shift, on a par with the leap between The Joshua Tree Tour and Zoo TV.

In rock'n'roll being first is 90% of the goal and so when we introduced large scale video to stadium rock with Zoo TV, precedence was a huge part of its success. You could mount Zoo TV or PopMart now and it would stand up to everything else that's out there. But there'd be no point for U2 because every show out there now looks like a cross between those two shows.

There have been watershed moments in the development of the rock show, productions which rewrote the book. 'Stop Making Sense', the Talking Heads tour, springs to mind. Laurie Anderson's 'United States Live', the first start-to-finish multi-media based show. Bono often cites the Rolling Stones 'Lotus Flower' stage and of course Pink Floyd's 'The Wall' was a culmination of that trajectory. With Zoo TV the industry's communal jaw hit the floor and big video production was born. That's the ultimate prize, creating a great show which also advances the form.

As far back as The Unforgettable Fire Tour in 1984, we were playing in the kind of configuration we have with U2 360°. The stage at one end, seats behind the stage, sort of in the round but without the band being right in the middle. But that was indoors. Outdoors there's no roof to hold anything up. When bands have tried playing in the round outdoors the staging has always looked rather apologetic, like a bandstand or a tram shed.

The postponed dates on the Vertigo Tour gave us some time to think about the next tour and this is when it dawned that for a U2 audience the one thing more powerful than having a backdrop of a big video screen would be to have a backdrop of more

of the audience. It was the Theme Building at LAX, Los Angeles International Airport, that crystalised it for me. It's a very space age looking restaurant with four legs and very sleek curves and when I imagined it straddling a football pitch, I knew I was onto something.

The problem was the legs to hold it up in the air. Having them so close to the stage obstructed the view. So instead of thinking, 'how do I make this thing less intrusive?' I realised we had to make it so big and intrusive that it essentially becomes part of the building. When I showed the band the initial sketches they gave it the thumbs up which was my cue to get in touch with Mark Fisher.

Mark Fisher has been my Siamese twin in the thinking behind U2 productions since PopMart. He's an architect with unrivalled experience in building rock shows, so his sense of whether something will work is critical. He sent me some initial sketches of the LAX Theme Building across a football pitch. When you see it, you know there's no way back. It's an absolutely wonderful, wonderful thing.

We got the green light from band early last year when work began to turn the drawings into reality. In April, when I finally saw this thing I'd had in my head towering above the Belgian town of Werchter, it was both strange and humbling. There may be another band with the imagination, ambition and courage to do something like this... but I can't think who they would be.

BIOGRAPHIES

U2

From the beginning, U2 were marked out by their drive and ambition, admitting they were a band “before they could play”. Bono, Edge, Larry Mullen and Adam Clayton met at Mt Temple School and formed U2 in 1978. They produced their first three albums with Steve Lillywhite; **Boy** (1980), **October** (1981) and **War** (1983). Their performance at Live Aid in July 1985 was watched by millions and Time Magazine declared U2 “Rock's Hottest Ticket”. Arena tours rolled into stadium tours and **The Joshua Tree** went on to win the Grammy for Album of the Year in 1987. They released **Achtung Baby** at the dawn of the 90’s and set off on **Zoo TV**, which travelled the globe twice in two years. That momentum created **Zooropa**, planned as a single recorded on the road that grew into an EP and eventually became U2’s eighth album in 1993. In 2000, U2 returned with **All That You Can't Leave Behind**; playing a series of gigs in small clubs for the first time in 17 years, Bono announced that U2 were reapplying for their old job - the world’s biggest rock band. As they took the Elevation Tour through Europe and the States (twice) in 2001, the unanimous verdict was that they had succeeded. Following the release of **How to Dismantle An Atomic Bomb** in 2005 U2 were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Acknowledged as one of the best live acts in the world, U2 have released 12 studio albums and with sales in excess of 155 million. They have won numerous awards; including 22 Grammy’s, an Oscar nomination and the Amnesty International, Ambassador of Conscience. In 2003 they won a Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song, **The Hand’s That Built America**, featured in *Gangs of New York*. U2 went out on the road last year with U2 360 in support of their album **No Line On The Horizon** - after the tour opened in Barcelona - U2 360 continued throughout Europe and North America. U2 are Larry Mullen, Bono, Edge and Adam Clayton.

Paul McGuinness

Paul McGuinness was born in Germany in 1951 and educated at Clongowes Wood College and Trinity College Dublin. He is the founder of Principle Management and is well known throughout the world in both the film and music business, with a long career in the entertainment industry.

Mr McGuinness is a director of Ardmore Film Studios in Ireland. He is a member of BAFTA and was a member of the Arts Council of Ireland for 12 years. In 2000, he was appointed to the Board of Digital Media Development Ltd by the Irish Government.

He established Principle Management in 1982, and has managed U2 from the start of their career. U2 have gone on to win 22 Grammys and have sold over 160 million albums worldwide. Principle Management is one of the world’s leading artist management companies with offices in Dublin and New York, overseeing Mercury Prize Winner - PJ Harvey and The Rapture.

Paul McGuinness has received numerous awards including Freedom of the City of Dublin with U2 (1999), Honorary Doctorate in Law from University College Dublin (2000), Pollstar Music Awards 'Personal Manager of the Year' (2003), 'Outstanding Contribution to British Music' at Music Week Awards, London (2006), Billboard 'Manager of the Year' (2005).

Alongside U2, he was awarded the Amnesty International Ambassador of Conscience Award in Chile in 2006.

He is married with two children and lives in Dublin.

Willie Williams – Show Designer & Director

Willie first worked with U2 on the War Tour in 1983. He has been U2's show designer since then having designed Unforgettable Fire (1984-85) Joshua Tree (1987) LoveTown (1980-90) Zoo TV (1992-93) PopMart (1997-98) Elevation (2001) and Vertigo (2005-06).

Williams collaborates closely with U2 on design ideas and his work with light, visual media and cutting edge technology has resulted in numerous groundbreaking designs. ZooTV was the largest multi-media rock production ever seen and for PopMart, Williams and stage architect Mark Fisher created the largest video screen in existence at that time.

As a video director, stage and lighting designer for concerts, theatre and multimedia projects is Williams is recognized as one of the leading artists in his field but he is best known for his groundbreaking work with U2 alongside R.E.M., David Bowie, The Rolling Stones, Darren Hayes and George Michael.

Williams has also designed for the legendary Montreal-based dance company La La La Human Steps. He has collaborated with Laurie Anderson, Marianne Faithfull and the Kronos Quartet (most notably on *Sun Rings*, a joint effort with NASA that combined the quartet's music with video and audio material collected by the Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 spacecraft).

Theatre shows Williams has worked on include *We Will Rock You*, *Little Britain Live*, *French and Saunders Still Alive*, *Steve Coogan is Alan Partridge* and *Other Less Successful Characters*, *The Fast Show Live*, *Barbarella* and *Pam Ann*.

Jake Berry – Production Director

Jake Berry is a multiple award winning Production Director with a career spanning more than 30 years. As production director, he is responsible for all operational aspects of the production from sound and lighting to worldwide strategy and transportation. He has worked with U2 on Elevation (2001), Vertigo (2005-06) and 360°.

Jake has worked on some of the largest and most successful tours and events in the world. Hailing from Devon, England, his career began as a drum and percussion technician. He worked as a heavy metal production master through the 1980s, progressing through various international tours with artists such as Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Tina Turner, Cher, The Rolling Stones and Metallica.

He is a huge fan of motorsports, supporting young racecar drivers in various categories from Formula 1 to NASCAR, assisting in the management and development of their careers.

Jake Berry is the founder and CEO of Fader Higher, a leading tour production management company. With a diversified set of skills, Fader Higher continues to be the premier production company in the world offering services in touring, sporting and large private events.

Joe O'Herlihy – Sound Designer

Joe has worked with U2 since the late 1970s. He first met the band in September 1978 when he supplied sound equipment for a gig at the Arcadia Ballroom in Cork. He has been doing live concert sound for U2 ever since, graduating from Sound Engineer to his current role as Sound Director / FOH Mix Engineer.

O'Herlihy has worked on U2 tours including Boy (1980-81), October (1981-82) War (1982-83), Unforgettable Fire (1984-85), Joshua Tree (1987), Lovetown (1989-90), Zoo TV (1992-93), PopMart (1997-98), Elevation (2001) and Vertigo (2005-06); as well as U2 performances for the Grammy Awards, NFL Superbowl and the Special Olympics Opening Ceremony among others.

For the 360° Tour, O'Herlihy faced his greatest challenge to date, creating a design that incorporates the latest advances in audio technology to achieve a perfect sound for a groundbreaking stage design.

He has also worked with REM, The Cranberries, The Counting Crows, The Undertones, David Bowie and Rory Gallagher.

Joe O'Herlihy was a sound consultant for Wembley Stadium, Eircom Park Stadium, Point Theatre Dublin and Woodstock '94; and is a Director of Pro-Audio Consultants Ltd, City Arts Centre, Dublin and Sound Director for Vanguardia Consulting.