

= The Joshua Tree =

The Joshua Tree is the fifth studio album by Irish rock band U2 . It was produced by Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno , and was released on 9 March 1987 on Island Records . In contrast to the ambient experimentation of their 1984 release The Unforgettable Fire , the band aimed for a harder @-@ hitting sound within the limitation of conventional song structures on The Joshua Tree . The album is influenced by American and Irish roots music , and depicts the band 's love ? hate relationship with the United States , using socially and politically conscious lyrics embellished with spiritual imagery .

Inspired by American tour experiences , literature , and politics , U2 chose America as a theme for the record . Recording began in January 1986 in Ireland , and to foster a relaxed , creative atmosphere , the group recorded in two houses , in addition to two professional studios . Several events during the sessions helped shape the conscious tone of the album , including the band 's participation in A Conspiracy of Hope tour , the death of roadie Greg Carroll , and lead vocalist Bono 's travels to Central America . Recording was completed in November 1986 ; additional production continued into January 1987 . Throughout the sessions , U2 sought a " cinematic " quality for the record , one that would evoke a sense of location , in particular , the open spaces of America . They represented this in the sleeve photography depicting them in American desert landscapes .

The Joshua Tree received critical acclaim , topped the charts in over 20 countries , and sold in record @-@ breaking numbers in the UK . According to Rolling Stone , the album increased the band 's stature " from heroes to superstars " . It produced the hit singles " With or Without You " , " I Still Haven 't Found What I 'm Looking For " , and " Where the Streets Have No Name " , the first two of which became the group 's only number @-@ one singles in the US . The album won Grammy Awards for Album of the Year and Best Rock Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal in 1988 . The group supported the record with the Joshua Tree Tour throughout 1987 . Frequently featured on critics ' lists of the greatest records , The Joshua Tree is one of the world 's best @-@ selling albums , with over 25 million copies sold . U2 released a remastered edition of the record in 2007 to commemorate its 20th anniversary . In 2014 , it was deemed " culturally , historically , or aesthetically significant " by the US Library of Congress and selected for preservation in the National Recording Registry .

= = Background = =

Before The Joshua Tree , U2 had released four studio albums and were an internationally successful band , particularly as a live act having toured every year in the 1980s . The group 's stature and the public 's anticipation for a new album grew following their 1984 record The Unforgettable Fire , their subsequent tour , and their participation in Live Aid in 1985 . U2 began writing new material in mid @-@ 1985 following the Unforgettable Fire Tour .

Band manager Paul McGuinness recounted that The Joshua Tree originated from the band 's " great romance " with the United States , as the group had toured the country for up to five months per year in the first half of the 1980s . Leading up to the album sessions , lead vocalist Bono had been reading the works of American writers such as Norman Mailer , Flannery O 'Connor , and Raymond Carver so as to understand , in the words of Hot Press editor Niall Stokes , " those on the fringes of the promised land , cut off from the American dream " . Following a 1985 humanitarian visit to Ethiopia with his wife Ali , Bono said , " Spending time in Africa and seeing people in the pits of poverty , I still saw a very strong spirit in the people , a richness of spirit I didn 't see when I came home ... I saw the spoiled child of the Western world . I started thinking , ' They may have a physical desert , but we 've got other kinds of deserts . ' And that 's what attracted me to the desert as a symbol of some sort . "

In 1985 , Bono participated in Steven Van Zandt 's anti @-@ apartheid Sun City project and spent time with musicians Keith Richards and Mick Jagger . When Richards and Jagger played blues , Bono was embarrassed by his lack of familiarity with the genre , as most of U2 's musical knowledge began with punk rock in their youth in the mid @-@ 1970s . Bono realised that U2 " had no tradition " , and he felt as if they " were from outer space " . This inspired him to write the blues @-@

influenced song " Silver and Gold " , which he recorded with Richards and Ronnie Wood . Until that time , U2 had been apathetic towards roots music , but after spending time with The Waterboys and fellow Irish band Hothouse Flowers , they felt a sense of indigenous Irish music blending with American folk music . Nascent friendships with Bob Dylan , Van Morrison and Richards encouraged U2 to look back to rock 's roots and focused Bono on his skills as a songwriter and lyricist . He explained , " I used to think that writing words was old @-@ fashioned , so I sketched . I wrote words on the microphone . For The Joshua Tree , I felt the time had come to write words that meant something , out of my experience . " Dylan told Bono of his own debt to Irish music , while Bono further demonstrated his interest in music traditions in his duet with Irish Celtic and folk group Clannad on the track " In a Lifetime " .

The band wanted to build on the textures of The Unforgettable Fire , but in contrast to that record 's often out @-@ of @-@ focus experimentation , they sought a harder @-@ hitting sound within the limitations of conventional song structures . The group referred to this approach as working within the " primary colours " of rock music ? guitar , bass , and drums . Guitarist The Edge was more interested in the European atmospherics of The Unforgettable Fire and was initially reluctant to follow the lead of Bono , who , inspired by Dylan 's instruction to " go back " , sought a more American , bluesy sound . Despite not having a consensus on musical direction , the group members agreed that they felt disconnected from the dominant synthpop and new wave music of the time , and they wanted to continue making music that contrasted with these genres . In late 1985 , U2 moved into drummer Larry Mullen , Jr . ' s newly purchased home to work on material written during The Unforgettable Fire Tour . This included demos that would evolve into " With or Without You " , " Red Hill Mining Town " , " Trip Through Your Wires " , and a song called " Womanfish " . The Edge recalled it as a difficult period with a sense of " going nowhere " , although Bono was set on America as a theme for the album .

= = Recording and production = =

Based on their success with producers Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois on The Unforgettable Fire , U2 wanted the duo to produce their new album . Mullen was excited about working with them again , as he felt the pair , Lanois in particular , were the band 's first producers who " really [took] an interest in the rhythm section " . Mark " Flood " Ellis was engineer for the sessions , marking the first time he worked with U2 . The band were impressed by his work with Nick Cave , and Bono 's friend Gavin Friday recommended Flood based on their work experiences together when Friday was a member of the Virgin Prunes . The band asked Flood for a sound that was " very open ... ambient ... with a real sense of space of the environment you were in " , which he thought was a very unusual request at that time .

Intending to release an album in late 1986 , U2 set up a studio in January of that year in Danesmoate House , a Georgian house in Rathfarnham in the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains . Their plan was to find inspiration from the recording space and use it to musically create atmosphere , much like they did with Slane Castle for The Unforgettable Fire sessions in 1984 . A makeshift control room with tape machines , a mixing desk , and other outboard equipment was set up in the dining room , with the adjacent drawing room used for recording and performing . The large doors separating the rooms were replaced with a glass screen , and to maintain a relaxed " non @-@ studio " atmosphere for the sessions , the control room was dubbed the " lyric room " and the recording space was called the " band room " . The band found the house to have a very creative atmosphere . The large drawing room , with a tall ceiling and wooden floors , created an " ear @-@ splitting " drum sound that , while difficult to work with , produced takes that ended up on the finished album . Lanois said that it " was loud , but it was really good loud , real dense , very musical . In my opinion it was the most rock and roll room of the lot . " He thought the room sounded better than Slane Castle , and he was particularly impressed with the room 's " low mid @-@ range ... where the music lives " , a property that he believes was a major factor in the success of The Joshua Tree .

U2 began with their usual method of sorting through tapes from soundcheck jams , working through

Bono 's lyric book , and recording jam sessions . One aspect of their recording methods changed after The Unforgettable Fire sessions ; rather than recording each instrument separately and layering them into the mix , U2 recorded all but two of The Joshua Tree 's songs " live " . U2 's songwriting methods were also developing ; not all material was being worked out in band sessions , rather Bono and The Edge often brought basic song ideas to the rest of the group . Eno and Lanois intentionally worked with the band at alternate times ? one producer for a week or two , followed by the other . Eno and Lanois encouraged an interest in older songs , especially American roots music . More contemporary references included the textural guitar work of The Smiths and My Bloody Valentine . The band 's musical vocabulary improved after their previous album , facilitating communication and collaboration with the production team . One of the first songs worked on was " Heartland " , which originated during The Unforgettable Fire sessions and was later released on the band 's 1988 album Rattle and Hum . Supplementary recording sessions at STS Studios in Dublin with producer Paul Barrett saw the development of " With or Without You " and the genesis of " Bullet the Blue Sky " . The arrangements for " With or Without You " and " I Still Haven 't Found What I 'm Looking For " were completed early in the Danesmoate sessions , giving the band the confidence to experiment .

U2 interrupted the sessions to join Amnesty International 's A Conspiracy of Hope tour of benefit concerts in June 1986 . Rather than distract the band , the tour added extra intensity and power to their new music and provided extra focus on what they wanted to say . For bassist Adam Clayton , the tour validated the " rawness of content " and their attempts to capture the " bleakness and greed of America under Ronald Reagan " . In July , Bono travelled with his wife Ali to Nicaragua and El Salvador and saw firsthand the distress of peasants bullied by political conflicts and US military intervention , experiences which formed the basis of the lyrics for " Bullet the Blue Sky " and " Mothers of the Disappeared " . The group experienced a tragedy later that month when Bono 's personal assistant and roadie Greg Carroll was killed in a motorcycle accident in Dublin . The 26 @-@ year @-@ old 's death overwhelmed the U2 organisation , and the band travelled to his native New Zealand to attend his traditional M?ori funeral ; an experience that inspired the lyrics to " One Tree Hill " .

On 1 August 1986 , U2 regrouped at Windmill Lane Studios in Dublin to resume work on the album . Writing and recording continued late into the year , with the band also using Danesmoate House and The Edge 's newly bought home , Melbeach . " Mothers of the Disappeared " and " Bullet the Blue Sky " were among the songs that evolved at Melbeach . Lanois said " the bulk of the record was done at The Edge 's house , even though the Danesmoate sessions were the backbone of the tonality of the record ? we got a lot of the drums done in there . " In August , Robbie Robertson , the former guitarist and primary songwriter for The Band , visited Dublin to complete an album that Lanois was producing . Robertson recorded two tracks with U2 that appear on his self @-@ titled solo album .

A creative spurt in October resulted in new song ideas but they were shelved at Eno 's suggestion lest the band miss their deadline for completing the album . Recording for The Joshua Tree wrapped up in November 1986 . Rough mixes had been created throughout the sessions after each song was recorded to , in Lanois ' words , take " snapshots along the way ... because sometimes you go too far " . The Edge explained that the arrangement and production of each song was approached individually and that while there was a strong uniform direction , they were prepared to " sacrifice some continuity to get the rewards of following each song to a conclusion " . The final weeks were a frantic rush to finish , with the band and production crew all suffering from exhaustion . Lanois and Pat McCarthy mixed songs at Melbeach on an AMEK 2500 mixing desk where , without console automation , they needed three people to operate the console . Eno and Flood had minimal involvement with the final mixes . In late December , U2 hired Steve Lillywhite , producer of their first three albums , to remix the potential singles . His job was to make the songs more appealing to commercial radio , and his eleventh @-@ hour presence and changes caused discontent among the production crew , including Eno and Lanois . Lillywhite 's remixing was done on an SSL desk and extended into the new year . While the band and crew were working on the album 's mixing , Lillywhite 's wife , singer Kirsty MacColl , volunteered to set the running order for the album . The

band told her to put " Where the Streets Have No Name " first and " Mothers of the Disappeared " last , with the rest sequenced according to her preference .

Following the completion of the album proper , U2 returned to the studio in January 1987 to complete the new material they shelved in October . These tracks , which included " Walk to the Water " , " Luminous Times (Hold on to Love) " , and " Spanish Eyes " , were completed as B @-@ sides for the planned singles . The song " Sweetest Thing " was left off the album and released as a B @-@ side , as the band felt it was incomplete and did not fit with the other songs . They later expressed regret that it had not been completed for The Joshua Tree . The track was re @-@ recorded as a single for the group 's 1998 compilation The Best of 1980 ? 1990 . The band considered releasing The Joshua Tree as a double @-@ album that would have included the B @-@ sides . Bono was the most vocal proponent of the idea , whereas The Edge argued for the 11 @-@ track version that was ultimately released . U2 agreed that one track , " Birdland " , was too strong for a B @-@ side and they withheld it for a future album release . In 2007 , a re @-@ recorded version of the song , retitled " Wave of Sorrow (Birdland) " , was included with the 20th anniversary edition of the album .

After completing The Joshua Tree , Bono said that he was " as pleased with the record as I can ever be pleased with a record " . Although he was " very rarely pleased " with how their previous albums turned out , he thought that The Joshua Tree was their most complete record since their first . Clayton bought Danesmoate House in 1987 , and it remains his Dublin home .

= = Composition = =

= = = Music = = =

U2 is credited with composing all of The Joshua Tree 's music . The album 's sound draws from American and Irish roots music more than the group 's previous albums , following the counsel and influence of Bob Dylan , Van Morrison , and Keith Richards . " I Still Haven 't Found What I 'm Looking For " has strong gospel influences , with Bono singing of spiritual doubt in an upper register and Eno , Lanois , and The Edge providing choir @-@ like backing vocals . The slow piano @-@ based ballad " Running to Stand Still " exhibits traits of folk music and acoustic blues in the track 's slide acoustic guitar and harmonica . " Trip Through Your Wires " , another song on which Bono plays harmonica , was described by Niall Stokes as a " bluesy romp " .

The Edge 's guitar playing on The Joshua Tree is characteristic of what came to be his trademark sound . His minimalist style sharply contrasted with the emphasis placed on virtuosity and speed by heavy metal in the 1980s . The Edge views musical notes as " expensive " , preferring to play as few of them as possible and to instead focus on simpler parts that serve the moods of the songs . Much of this was achieved with a delay effect , contributing to a chiming , echo @-@ laden sound . For example , the riff in the introduction of the opening track " Where the Streets Have No Name " is a repeated six @-@ note arpeggio , with delay used to repeat notes . The riffs to " I Still Haven 't Found What I 'm Looking For " and " With or Without You " also prominently use delay , with Bono likening the guitar hook from the former track to " chrome bells " . Writer Derek White conducted a mathematical study of The Edge 's rhythmic delay in an attempt to explain why his playing style on the record appealed to him so much . For a given song , White found that by dividing the number of repeated delay notes per minute by the song 's tempo in beats per minute , he arrived at e , an important mathematical constant that is used to explain many natural phenomena .

The Edge continued to employ the ambient techniques of guitar playing that he used on The Unforgettable Fire ; for " With or Without You " , he used a prototype of the Infinite Guitar to add layers of sustained notes , an approach he first took on his 1986 solo album , the Captive soundtrack . On other songs , his guitar playing is more aggressive ; " Exit " was described by Colin Hogg as a " decidedly scary ... guitar @-@ driven barrage " , while Andrew Mueller said the guitar sounds from " Bullet the Blue Sky " evoke images of fighter planes . The Edge developed the harsh , feedback @-@ charged guitar part for the latter song at Bono 's instruction to " put El Salvador

through an amplifier " , after Bono returned angry from a visit to the war @-@ torn country . Bono also contributed to songwriting on guitar ; the Spanish guitar melody in " Mothers of the Disappeared " originated from a song that he wrote in Ethiopia to teach children about basic hygiene .

Much like on past records , Bono exhibits an expressive , open @-@ throated vocal delivery , which many critics described as " passionate " . Spin found that the group 's exploration of roots music resulted in Bono 's style expanding , saying that he " commands the full whisper @-@ to @-@ shout range of blues mannerisms " . Bono attributes this maturation to " loosening up " , " discover [ing] other voices " , and employing more restraint in his singing . His vocals became , in the words of Thom Duffy , more " dynamic " than they had been on previous records . On " Where the Streets Have No Name " , his voice varies greatly in its timbre (as writer Mark Butler describes , " he sighs ; he moans ; he grunts ; he exhales audibly ; he allows his voice to crack ") and its timing by his usage of rubato to slightly offset the sung notes from the beat . For author Susan Fast , " With or Without You " marks the first track on which he " extended his vocal range downward in an appreciable way " .

= = = Lyrics = = =

Bono is credited as the album 's sole lyricist . Thematically , the album juxtaposes antipathy towards the United States against the band 's deep fascination with the country , its open spaces , freedoms , and ideals . Anger is directed particularly at the perceived greed of the Ronald Reagan administration and its foreign policy in Central America . Bono said , " I started to see two Americas , the mythic America and the real America " , hence the album 's working title , The Two Americas . Having toured the US extensively in the past , the group were inspired by the country 's geography . As such , the desert , rain , dust , and water appear as lyrical motifs throughout the record . In many cases , the desert is used as a metaphor for " spiritual drought " . One track that chiefly represents these themes is " In God 's Country " , which critic Barbara Jaeger interpreted as addressing America 's role as the " promised land " . Clayton explained the impact of the desert imagery : " The desert was immensely inspirational to us as a mental image for this record . Most people would take the desert on face value and think it 's some kind of barren place , which of course is true . But in the right frame of mind , it 's also a very positive image , because you can actually do something with blank canvas , which is effectively what the desert is . "

Political and social concerns were the basis for several tracks . Bono wrote the lyrics for " Bullet the Blue Sky " after visiting El Salvador during the Salvadoran Civil War and witnessing how the conflict between rebels and the US @-@ backed government affected local civilians . This trip also inspired " Mothers of the Disappeared " , after Bono met members of COMADRES ? the Mothers of the Disappeared ? a group of women whose children were killed or " disappeared " during the civil war at the hands of the local government . The 1984 UK mining strike inspired the lyrics for " Red Hill Mining Town " , which Bono wrote from the perspective of a couple affected by the strike . The story of a heroin @-@ addicted couple was the basis for " Running to Stand Still " , which Bono set in Dublin 's Ballymun Flats . For " Where the Streets Have No Name " , he wrote the lyrics in response to the idea that , in Belfast , a person 's religion and income can be deduced based on the street they live on . " Exit " portrays the thoughts of a psychotic killer , although Clayton suggests the line " He saw the hands that build could also pull down " is also a jab at the US government 's conflicting roles in international relations .

Bono described 1986 as " an incredibly bad year " for him , which was reflected in the lyrics . His marriage was under strain , in part due to the album 's long gestation period , the band were criticised by the Irish media for their involvement in the Self Aid event , and his personal assistant Greg Carroll was killed in a motorcycle accident in Dublin . Bono said , " That 's why the desert attracted me as an image . That year was really a desert for us . " " With or Without You " was written while he was struggling to reconcile his wanderlust as a musician with his domestic responsibilities . " One Tree Hill " , named after a volcanic peak in Carroll 's native New Zealand , describes how Bono felt at Carroll 's funeral . The album is dedicated to his memory .

The group 's religious faith was a source of inspiration for many lyrics . On " I Still Haven 't Found

What I'm Looking For", Bono affirms this faith but sings of spiritual doubt ("I believe in Kingdom Come" ... "But I still haven't found what I'm looking for"). Some critics surmised that the place Bono is referring to on "Where the Streets Have No Name" is Heaven. These two songs were singled out by some critics as demonstrating that the band was on a "spiritual quest". Hot Press editor Niall Stokes and Richard Harrington of The Washington Post interpreted "With or Without You" in both romantic and spiritual manners. Biblical references are made on other songs like "Bullet the Blue Sky" ("Jacob wrestled the angel", images of fire and brimstone) and "In God's Country" ("I stand with the sons of Cain"). Thom Duffy interpreted the album as an exploration of the "uncertainty and pain of a spiritual pilgrimage through a bleak and harsh world".

= = Packaging and title = =

The album sleeve was designed by Steve Averill, based on the band's idea to depict the record's "imagery, and cinematic location" in the desert. The initial concept for the sleeve was to represent where the desert met civilisation, and accordingly, one of the provisional titles for the album was The Desert Songs, in addition to The Two Americas. They asked their photographer Anton Corbijn to search for locations in the US that would capture this. From 14 ? 16 December 1986, the band travelled with Corbijn and Averill on a bus around the Mojave Desert in California for a three @-@ day photo shoot. The group stayed in small hotels and shot in the desert landscape, beginning at the ghost town of Bodie before moving to locations such as Zabriskie Point and other sites in Death Valley. For the shoot, Corbijn rented a panoramic camera to capture more of the desert landscapes, but having no prior experience with the camera, he was unfamiliar with how to focus it. This led to him focusing on the background and leaving the band slightly out of focus. Corbijn said, "Fortunately there was a lot of light." He later recounted that the main idea of the shoot was to juxtapose "man and environment, the Irish in America".

On the evening after the first day's shooting, Corbijn told the band about Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*), hardy and twisted plants in the deserts of the American Southwest, and he suggested their use on the sleeve. Bono was pleased to discover the religious significance of the plant's etymology; early settlers, according to Mormon legend, named the plant after the Old Testament prophet Joshua, as the tree's stretching branches reminded them of Joshua raising his hands in prayer. The following day, Bono declared that the album should be titled The Joshua Tree. That day, while driving on Route 190, they spotted a lone @-@ standing tree in the desert. Corbijn had been hoping to find a single tree, as he thought it would result in better photographs than if he shot the band amongst a group of trees. They stopped the bus and photographed with the lone plant for about 20 minutes, something The Edge called "fairly spontaneous". Despite shooting in the desert in the day, the group dealt with cold weather. Bono explained, "it was freezing and we had to take our coats off so it would at least look like a desert. That's one of the reasons we look so grim." Regarding the serious tone of the images, Corbijn said, "I guess people felt they took themselves too seriously. It was definitely the most serious, I think, that you can photograph a band. You couldn't go any further down that line unless you start photographing graves." The final day of shooting was spent in snow @-@ covered ghost towns.

Corbijn's original idea for the sleeve was to have a shot of the Joshua tree on the front, with the band in a continuation of the photograph on the back. Ultimately, separate photographs were used for each side of the sleeve; an image of the group at Zabriskie Point was placed on the front, while an image of them with the tree appears on the reverse side. Rolling Stone believes the title and the images of the tree befit an album concerned with "resilience in the face of utter social and political desolation, a record steeped in religious imagery". In 1991, Rolling Stone ranked the album at number 97 on its list of the "100 Greatest Album Covers of All Time". The tree photographed for the sleeve fell around 2000, yet the site remains a popular attraction for U2 fans to pay tribute to the group. One person inserted a plaque into the ground reading, "Have you found what you're looking for?", in reference to the album's track "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For". It is a common misconception that the site is within Joshua Tree National Park, when in fact it is over 200 miles away from the park. In 2011, Guus van Hove, the director of the Dutch music venue 013

, and his girlfriend died of heat exhaustion in a remote part of that park , allegedly searching for the site of U2 's tree .

= = Release = =

Just prior to the release of The Joshua Tree , Bono was stricken with a sudden panic about the quality of the completed album . He said that he contemplated calling the production plants to order a halt of the record 's pressing , but he ultimately held off . Island Records spent over \$ 100 @,@ 000 on store displays advertising the album ; president Lou Maglia called it " the most complete merchandising effort ever assembled " . The Joshua Tree was released on 9 March 1987 , the first new release to be made available on the compact disc , vinyl record , and cassette tape formats on the same date . Record stores in Britain and Ireland opened at midnight to accommodate the large amount of fans who had queued outside to buy the album .

The Joshua Tree became , at the time , the fastest @-@ selling album in British history , selling over 300 @,@ 000 copies in two days . On 21 March 1987 , it debuted on the UK Albums Chart at number one , spending two weeks at the top position , and it remained on the chart for 163 weeks . On the US Billboard Top Pop Albums chart , the album debuted on 4 April 1987 at number seven , the highest debut for a studio album in the US in almost seven years . Within three weeks , it topped the chart , where it remained for nine consecutive weeks , the band 's longest number @-@ one reign on the chart . The album spent a total of 103 weeks on the Billboard Top Pop Albums , 35 of them in the top 10 . On 13 May 1987 , the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certified the album triple @-@ platinum . All of the group 's previous albums re @-@ entered the Billboard Top Pop Albums chart in 1987 . In Canada , the album debuted at number 51 on the RPM Top 100 Albums chart on 21 March 1987 , and climbed to number one just two weeks later . Within 14 days of release , it sold 300 @,@ 000 units in Canada and was certified triple @-@ platinum . The Joshua Tree topped the albums charts in 19 other countries , including Austria , Switzerland , New Zealand , and Sweden . Rolling Stone declared that the album increased the band 's stature " from heroes to superstars " . It was the first album by any artist to sell one million copies on CD in the US . U2 became the fourth rock band to be featured on the cover of Time (following The Beatles , The Band , and The Who) , who declared that U2 was " Rock 's Hottest Ticket " .

" With or Without You " was released as the lead single on 21 March 1987 , with the B @-@ sides " Luminous Times (Hold on to Love) " and " Walk to the Water " . The single quickly topped the Billboard Hot 100 , becoming the band 's first number @-@ one hit in America . The song topped the singles chart in Canada , while reaching number four in the UK and number two in the Netherlands . The group originally planned to use " Red Hill Mining Town " as the second single . However , the group were unhappy with the music video filmed by Neil Jordan , and Bono and Mullen had difficulty performing the song during rehearsals . Ultimately , the group canceled the single . Instead , " I Still Haven 't Found What I 'm Looking For " was chosen as the second single , and it was released in May 1987 with the tracks " Spanish Eyes " and " Deep in the Heart " as B @-@ sides . Like its predecessor , it topped the Hot 100 , giving U2 consecutive number @-@ one singles in the US . The single peaked at number six in the UK , Canada , and the Netherlands . By May , sales of the album surpassed 7 million copies worldwide .

" Where the Streets Have No Name " was released in August 1987 as the third single , with " Sweetest Thing " , " Silver and Gold " , and " Race Against Time " as B @-@ sides . The single reached number seven in the Netherlands , number four on the UK Singles Chart , and number 13 in the US . The album 's first three singles all topped the Irish Singles Charts , while charting within the top 20 of the singles charts in the UK , the US , Canada , New Zealand , and the Netherlands . " In God 's Country " was released as a fourth single exclusively in North America in November 1987 , peaking at number 44 on the Hot 100 , and charting at number 48 as an import single in the UK . " One Tree Hill " was released as a fourth single in Australia and New Zealand in March 1988 , and having been written for the New Zealand @-@ native Carroll , it reached number one in his home country . By the end of 1988 , The Joshua Tree had sold more than 14 million copies worldwide .

In 1996 , Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab remastered the album and released it as a special gold CD .

This edition rectified the incorrect track splitting between " One Tree Hill " and " Exit " that affected some CD releases ; the quiet coda that concludes " One Tree Hill " had previously been included in the same track as " Exit " .

= = Critical reception = =

The Joshua Tree received critical acclaim , and the best reviews of U2 's career to that point . Rolling Stone wrote , " For a band that 's always specialized in inspirational , larger @-@ than @-@ life gestures ? a band utterly determined to be Important ? The Joshua Tree could be the big one , and that 's precisely what it sounds like . " The review described the album 's sound as " wed [ding] the diverse textures of The Unforgettable Fire to fully formed songs , many of them as aggressive as the hits on War " . Steve Morse of The Boston Globe echoed these sentiments in his review , stating , " It 's another spiritual progress report , enwrapped in music that strikes a healthy balance between the lushness of their last album , 1984 's The Unforgettable Fire , and the more volcanic rock of their early years . " Morse called it " their most challenging work to date " and the " most rewarding rock record of the new year " . Q said " their reinvention of stadium rock sounds as impassioned as ever " and that the album strikes " a finely balanced mix of intimacy and power " . NME praised the album as " a better and braver record than anything else that 's likely to appear in 1987 ... It 's the sound of people still trying , still looking ... " Thom Duffy of the Orlando Sentinel said the songs have " exultant power " that , " like the Joshua Tree 's branches , stretch upward in stark contrast to their barren musical surroundings on rock radio " . He praised the musicianship of the group members , calling Bono 's vocals " wrenching " , the rhythm section of Mullen and Clayton " razor @-@ sharp " , and The Edge 's guitar playing " never ... better " .

The New Zealand Herald called The Joshua Tree " the most compelling collection of music yet from a band that has cut its career with passionate , exciting slashes " . It judged that the record 's " power lies in its restraint " and that there is an " urgency underlying virtually all of the 11 songs " . Spin hailed the record as U2 's " first wholly successful album because it finally breaks free from the seductive but limiting chant @-@ and @-@ drone approach of earlier material " . The review stated , " There isn 't a bad song on the record " and that " every one has a hook " . The magazine praised U2 for eschewing ambient experimentation in favour of uncomplicated but layered arrangements . Robert Hilburn of the Los Angeles Times said the album " confirms on record what this band has been slowly asserting for three years now on stage : U2 is what the Rolling Stones ceased being years ago ? the greatest rock and roll band in the world " . Hilburn noted that the band showed " sometimes breathtaking signs of growth " and played more " tailored and assured " music . Hot Press editor and longtime U2 supporter Bill Graham said that " The Joshua Tree rescues rock from its decay , bravely and unashamedly basing itself in the mainstream before very cleverly lifting off into several higher dimensions , " and that U2 " must be taken very seriously indeed after this revaluation of rock " . John Rockwell of The New York Times , although complimentary of the band for expanding its musical range , was more critical of Bono 's vocals , which he said were " marred throughout by sobbing affectation " and sounded too much like other singers , resulting in a " curious loss of individuality " . The Houston Chronicle felt it has " music that both soothes and inspires , music that is anthemic , music with style " . The reviewer , however , believed the group took itself too seriously , resulting in a record that is " not a whole lot of fun , bordering on the pretentious " , which caused him to lose interest by the second side . Robert Christgau from The Village Voice found the lyrics tasteful and the music " mournful and passionate , stately and involved " , but lamented what he felt was pompous singing by Bono , calling it " one of the worst cases of significance ever to afflict a deserving candidate for superstardom " .

In a retrospective review , Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic said " their focus has never been clearer , nor has their music been catchier " . His review concluded , " Never before have U2 's big messages sounded so direct and personal . " Anthony DeCurtis of Rolling Stone compared the album to Bruce Springsteen 's Born in the U.S.A. , stating that both records " lifted a populist artist to mega @-@ stardom " , and that the musicians ' uplifting live shows and the " sheer aural pleasure " of the two records obscured their foreboding nature . DeCurtis summarized The Joshua Tree 's

examination of America both lyrically and musically as such :

" The wild beauty , cultural richness , spiritual vacancy and ferocious violence of America are explored to compelling effect in virtually every aspect of The Joshua Tree ? in the title and the cover art , the blues and country borrowings evident in the music ... Indeed , Bono says that ' dismantling the mythology of America ' is an important part of The Joshua Tree 's artistic objective . "

In voting for Rolling Stone 's 1987 end @-@ of @-@ year readers ' polls , U2 won for the categories " Best Album " , " Artist of the Year " , " Best Band " , " Best Single (" With or Without You) " , and " Best Male Singer " (Bono) . The album placed fourth on the " Best Albums " list from The Village Voice 's 1987 Pazz & Jop critics ' poll . U2 earned their first two Grammy Awards in 1988 , winning honors for Album of the Year (beating acts such as Michael Jackson , Prince , and Whitney Houston) and Best Rock Performance By a Duo or Group With Vocal for The Joshua Tree .

= = The Joshua Tree Tour = =

Following the release of The Joshua Tree , U2 staged the worldwide Joshua Tree Tour . Lasting from April to December 1987 , it comprised 109 shows over three legs . The first and third legs visited the US , while the second leg toured Europe . The Joshua Tree elevated the group to a new level of popularity ; the tour sold out arenas and stadiums around the world ? the first time they consistently performed at venues of that size ? and it played to over 3 million people . Songs from the album became staples of the tour 's setlists , as the group regularly performed eight of the record 's eleven tracks , and the only song not to be played was " Red Hill Mining Town " .

Like their previous tours , The Joshua Tree Tour was a minimalistic , austere production , and U2 used this outlet for addressing political and social concerns . One such issue was Arizona Governor Evan Mecham 's canceling the state 's observance of Martin Luther King , Jr . Day . Throughout the tour , the group continued to explore American roots music : they collaborated with folk artist Bob Dylan , blues musician B. B. King , and Harlem 's New Voices of Freedom gospel choir ; U2 also visited Graceland and Sun Studios in Memphis , where they recorded new material . These new songs and the band 's experiences on tour were documented for the 1988 Rattle and Hum album and Phil Joanou @-@ directed motion picture .

The tour grossed \$ 40 million , but despite its commercial success and positive reviews , U2 were dissatisfied creatively , and Bono believed they were musically unprepared for their success . Mullen said , " We were the biggest , but we weren 't the best " , and for Bono the tour was " one of the worst times of [their] musical life " . On the road , the group dealt with death threats , along with injuries that Bono sustained from performing . The band hinted that the stresses of touring led them to enjoy the " rock and roll lifestyle " they previously avoided .

= = Legacy = =

The Joshua Tree is the band 's best @-@ selling album , and with 25 million copies sold worldwide , it is among the best @-@ selling albums worldwide . It ranks as one of the best @-@ selling albums in the US . In 1995 , the RIAA certified it 10 x platinum for shipping 10 million units , and the album subsequently received the Diamond Award for reaching this level . Similarly , the Canadian Recording Industry Association certified the album diamond in Canada . In the UK , The Joshua Tree ranks as the 36th @-@ highest @-@ selling record with 2 @.@ 79 million copies sold , having been certified 8 x platinum , with an additional silver certification for the 20th anniversary edition . In the Pacific , it is certified 5 x platinum and 14 x platinum in Australia and New Zealand , respectively .

The Joshua Tree has been acclaimed by writers and music critics as one of the greatest albums of all time ; according to Acclaimed Music , it is the 39th @-@ highest @-@ ranked record on critics ' lists . In 1997 , The Guardian collated worldwide data in 1997 from a range of renowned critics , artists , and radio DJs , who placed the record at number 57 in the list of the " 100 Best Albums Ever " . In 2006 , Time named it as one of the magazine 's 100 best albums , while Hot Press ranked it

11th in a similar list . Q named it one of the 40 greatest records from the 1980s , while Entertainment Weekly included the album on its list of the 100 best records released between 1983 and 2008 . In 2010 , the album appeared at number 62 on Spin 's list of the 125 most influential albums in the 25 years since the magazine launched . The publication said , " The band 's fifth album spit out hits like crazy , and they were unusually searching hits , each with a pointed political edge . " Rolling Stone magazine ranked the album at number 27 on their 2012 list of " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " , calling it " an album that turns spiritual quests and political struggles into uplifting stadium singalongs " . It was U2 's best position on the list . That year , in Slant Magazine 's list of the " Best Albums of the 1980s " , the publication said that The Joshua Tree 's opening trio of songs helped " the band become lords and emperors of anthemic ' 80s rock " and that " U2 no longer belonged to Dublin , but the world . " In 2014 , The Joshua Tree was selected for preservation in the National Recording Registry by the US Library of Congress for being deemed " culturally , historically , or aesthetically significant " .

The band 's penchant for addressing political and social issues , as well as their staid depiction in Corbijn 's black @-@ and @-@ white sleeve photographs , contributed to the group 's earnest and serious image as " stone @-@ faced pilgrim [s] " . This image became a target for derision after the band 's critically maligned Rattle and Hum project in 1988 . Various critics called them " po @-@ faced " , " pompous bores " , and " humourless " . The group 's continued exploration of American music for the project was labelled " pretentious " and " misguided and bombastic " . After Bono told fans on the 1989 Lovetown Tour that U2 would " dream it all up again " , the band reinvented themselves in the 1990s . They incorporated alternative rock , industrial music , and electronic dance music into their sound , and adopted a more self @-@ deprecating , flippant image by which they embraced the " rock star " identity they struggled with in the 1980s . The band referred to their 1991 album Achtung Baby as " chopping down the Joshua Tree " . Bill Flanagan summarised the impact of The Joshua Tree on the group 's career in his liner notes to the album 's 20th anniversary release : " The Joshua Tree made U2 into international rock stars and established both a standard they would always have to live up to and an image they would forever try to live down . "

= = 20th anniversary remastered edition = =

On 20 November 2007 , a 20th anniversary edition of The Joshua Tree was released . The album was remastered from the original analogue recordings under the direction of The Edge , and also restores the original vinyl album art , as the first CD pressings of the album had a heavily stretched out version of the band photo . The release was made available in four formats : a single CD ; a two @-@ disc deluxe edition with a bonus audio CD ; a three @-@ disc box set with bonus audio CD and DVD , photograph prints , and hardcover book ; and a double vinyl edition . All editions included a booklet with liner notes by author Bill Flanagan and " previously unseen " photographs by Anton Corbijn .

Manager Paul McGuinness explained , " There has been continuous demand from U2 fans to have The Joshua Tree properly re @-@ mastered . As always , the band had to make sure it was right , and now it is . " The bonus CD that was included with two of the remastered formats contains B @-@ sides and rarities / demos from The Joshua Tree . Some formats include expanded liner notes from the band members , the production team , and Anton Corbijn . In an otherwise favourable review of the remastered album , Andrew Mueller of Uncut said that " any casual listener who can perceive a meaningful difference between this and the original has i) ears like a bat and / or ii) needs to get out more " .

= = Bonus audio CD = =

The bonus audio CD features 14 additional tracks , including the B @-@ sides " Luminous Times (Hold on to Love) " , " Walk to the Water " , " Spanish Eyes " , " Deep in the Heart " , " Silver and Gold " , " Sweetest Thing " , and " Race Against Time " . Two versions of " Silver and Gold " are included ? the B @-@ side version , and the original recording from the Sun City album , with Keith

Richards and Ron Wood . The edited single version of " Where the Streets Have No Name " appears on the bonus CD . " Beautiful Ghost / Introduction to Songs of Experience " features lyrics from the introduction of William Blake 's Songs of Experience , and was previously released in The Complete U2 digital box set in 2004 . " Wave of Sorrow (Birdland) " , " Desert of Our Love " , " Rise Up " , and " Drunk Chicken / America " are all previously unreleased recordings from The Joshua Tree sessions . " Wave of Sorrow (Birdland) " is a completed version of the demo " Birdland " , and " Drunk Chicken / America " features an excerpt of Allen Ginsberg 's recitation of his poem , " America " .

= = = Bonus DVD = = =

The bonus DVD features live concert footage , a documentary , and two music videos . The disc includes Live from Paris , an 85 @-@ minute concert from 4 July 1987 that was originally broadcast on British television in celebration of the 25th anniversary of Island Records . It was later released as a live album through the iTunes Store in July 2008 ; three cover songs are excluded from both releases of the concert . The documentary , titled Outside It 's America , was a 1987 MTV production about The Joshua Tree Tour . The two music videos are an alternate version " With or Without You " and the previously unreleased video for " Red Hill Mining Town " . Footage of U2 's alter ego country band , The Dalton Brothers , is included on the disc as an Easter egg .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Bono , all music composed by U2 .

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts and certifications = =