

= Where the Streets Have No Name =

" Where the Streets Have No Name " is a song by Irish rock band U2 . It is the opening track from their 1987 album The Joshua Tree and was released as the album 's third single in August 1987 . The song 's hook is a repeating guitar arpeggio using a delay effect , played during the song 's introduction and again at the end . Lead vocalist Bono wrote the lyrics in response to the notion that it is possible to identify a person 's religion and income based on the street on which they lived , particularly in Belfast . During the band 's difficulties recording the song , producer Brian Eno considered erasing the song 's tapes to have them start from scratch .

" Where the Streets Have No Name " was praised by critics and became a commercial success , peaking at number thirteen in the US , number fourteen in Canada , number ten in the Netherlands , and number four in the United Kingdom . The song has remained a staple of their live act since the song debuted in 1987 on The Joshua Tree Tour . The song was performed on a Los Angeles rooftop for the filming of its music video , which won a Grammy Award for Best Performance Music Video .

= = Writing and recording = =

The music for " Where the Streets Have No Name " originated from a demo that guitarist The Edge composed the night before the group resumed The Joshua Tree sessions . In an upstairs room at Melbeach House ? his newly purchased home ? The Edge used a four @-@ track tape machine to record an arrangement of keyboards , bass , guitar , and a drum machine . Realising that the album sessions were approaching the end and that the band were short on exceptional live songs , The Edge wanted to " conjure up the ultimate U2 live @-@ song " , so he imagined what he would like to hear at a future U2 show if he were a fan . After finishing the rough mix , he felt he had come up with " the most amazing guitar part and song of [ his ] life " . With no one in the house to share the demo with , The Edge recalls dancing around and punching the air in celebration .

Although the band liked the demo , it was difficult for them to record the song . Bassist Adam Clayton said , " At the time it sounded like a foreign language , whereas now we understand how it works " . The arrangement , with two time signature shifts and frequent chord changes , was rehearsed many times , but the group struggled to get a performance they liked . According to co @-@ producer Daniel Lanois , " that was the science project song . I remember having this massive schoolhouse blackboard , as we call them . I was holding a pointer , like a college professor , walking the band through the chord changes like a fucking nerd . It was ridiculous . " Co @-@ producer Brian Eno estimates that half of the album sessions were spent trying to record a suitable version of " Where the Streets Have No Name " . The band worked on a single take for weeks , but as Eno explained , that particular version had a lot of problems with it and the group continued trying to fix it up . Through all of their work , they had gradually replaced each instrument take until nothing remained from the original performance .

So much time had been spent on " screwdriver work " that Eno thought it would be best to start from scratch . His idea was to " stage an accident " and have the song 's tapes erased . He said that this was not to force abandonment of the song , but rather that it would be more effective to start again with a fresh performance . At one point , Eno had the tapes cued up and ready to be recorded over , but this erasure never took place ; according to engineer Flood , fellow engineer Pat McCarthy returned to the control room and upon seeing Eno ready to erase the tapes , dropped the tray of tea he was carrying and physically restrained Eno .

The studio version of the song was compiled from several different takes . It was one of several songs mixed by Steve Lillywhite in the final months of recording The Joshua Tree . Drummer Larry Mullen , Jr. later said of the song , " It took so long to get that song right , it was difficult for us to make any sense of it . It only became a truly great song through playing live . On the record , musically , it 's not half the song it is live . "

= = Composition = =

" Where the Streets Have No Name " is played at a tempo of 126 beats per minute . The introduction and outro are played in a 3 / 4 time signature , while the remainder of the song is in a common 4 / 4 signature . The song opens with an instrumental section , starting with chorale @-@ like sustained synthesiser notes . The guitar fades in after 42 seconds ; this part consists of a repeated " chiming " six @-@ note arpeggio . A " dotted eighth " delay effect is used to " play " each note in the arpeggio twice , thus creating a rich sound . The bass and drums enter at 1 : 10 .

The introduction , following a I ? IV ? I ? IV ? vi ? V ? I chord progression , creates a " wall of sound " , as described by Mark Butler , against which the vocals emerge after nearly two minutes . The guitar part played for the remainder of the song features The Edge strumming percussive sixteenth notes . The bass and drums continue in regular eighth and sixteenth notes , respectively , while Bono 's vocal performance , in contrast , varies greatly in its timbre , ( " he sighs ; he moans ; he grunts ; he exhales audibly ; he allows his voice to crack " ) as well as timing by his usage of rubato to slightly offset the notes he sings from the beat .

This development reaches a climax during the first chorus at the line " burning down love " ( A ? G ? F ? ? D ) ; the melody progresses through a series of scale degrees that lead to the highest note in the song , the A4 at " burning " . In later choruses , Bono sings " blown by the wind " with the same melody , stretching the same note even longer . After the third chorus , the song 's outro is played , the instrumentation reverting to the same state as it was in the introduction , with a six @-@ note guitar arpeggio played against sustained synthesiser notes .

= = Lyrics = =

The lyrics were inspired by a story that Bono heard about the streets of Belfast , Northern Ireland , where a person 's religion and income are evident by the street they live on . He contrasted this with the anonymity he felt when visiting Ethiopia , saying : " ... the guy in the song recognizes this contrast and thinks about a world where there aren 't such divisions , a place where the streets have no name . To me , that 's the way a great rock ' n ' roll concert should be : a place where everyone comes together ... Maybe that 's the dream of all art : to break down the barriers and the divisions between people and touch upon the things that matter the most to us all . " Bono wrote the lyrics while on a humanitarian visit to Ethiopia with his wife , Ali Hewson ; he first wrote them down on an airsickness bag while staying in a village .

According to him , the song is ostensibly about " Transcendence , elevation , whatever you want to call it . " Bono , who compared many of his lyrics prior to The Joshua Tree to " sketches " , said that " ' Where the Streets Have No Name ' is more like the U2 of old than any of the other songs on the LP , because it 's a sketch ? I was just trying to sketch a location , maybe a spiritual location , maybe a romantic location . I was trying to sketch a feeling . "

The open @-@ ended nature of the lyrics has led to many interpretations . Journalist Michael Campbell believed the lyrics send " a message of hope " and wish for a " world that is not divided by class , wealth , race , or any other arbitrary criterion " . With regard to the place Bono was referring to in the song , he said , " I 'm not sure , really , about that . I used to think it was Belfast ... " Journalist Niall Stokes believes the title was influenced by Bono 's and his wife Ali 's visit to Ethiopia as volunteer aid @-@ workers . Bono has expressed mixed opinions about the open @-@ ended lyrics : " I can look at it now and recognize that [ the song ] has one of the most banal couplets in the history of pop music . But it also contains some of the biggest ideas . In a curious way , that seems to work . If you get any way heavy about these things , you don 't communicate . But if you 're flip or throwaway about it , then you do . That 's one of the paradoxes I 've come to terms with . "

= = Release = =

Originally , the third single from The Joshua Tree was meant to be the song " Red Hill Mining Town " , but " Where the Streets Have No Name " was released instead , in August 1987 . The single was released on 7 @-@ inch , 12 @-@ inch , cassette and CD single formats . Three B @-@ sides were

featured on the single , including " Race Against Time " , " Silver and Gold " , and " Sweetest Thing " , except for the 7 @-@ inch release , which only featured the latter two tracks . The 12 @-@ inch single featured " Race Against Time " on side A of the record ( despite being a " B @-@ side " ) , and the cassette single featured all four tracks on both sides of the tape . Although not as successful as the album 's first two singles , the song did chart well . In the U.S. , the song peaked at number 13 on the Billboard Hot 100 and number 11 on the Album Rock Tracks charts . The song reached number four on the UK Singles Chart , and it topped the Irish Singles Chart .

= = = Music video = = =

The video begins with an aerial shot of a block in Los Angeles , and clips of radio broadcasts are heard with disc jockeys stating that U2 is planning on performing a concert downtown and expecting crowds of 30 @,@ 000 people . Police show up to the set and inform the band 's crew of the security issue that the film shoot is causing , due to the large number of people who are coming to watch the performance . Two minutes into the video , U2 are seen on the roof of a liquor store at the corner of 7th Ave. and S. Main St. , and perform " Where the Streets Have No Name " to a large crowd of people standing in the streets surrounding the building . Towards the end of the song , the police tell the crew that the performance is about to be shut down , and eventually police walk onto the roof while the crowd are booing the police .

The video for " Where the Streets Have No Name " was directed by Meiert Avis and produced by Michael Hamlyn and Ben Dossett . The band attracted over 1 @,@ 000 people during the video 's filming , which took place on the rooftop of a liquor store in Downtown Los Angeles on 27 March 1987 . The band 's performance on a rooftop in a public place was a reference to The Beatles ' final concert , as depicted in the film Let It Be .

During the shoot U2 played an eight @-@ song set , which included four performances of " Where the Streets Have No Name " . Prior to filming , a week was spent reinforcing the roof of the liquor store to ensure it would not collapse if it were to be intruded by a group of fans . A backup generator was put on the roof so the shooting could continue in the event that the authorities shut off the power on the primary generator , which happened during filming .

The depiction of the police attempting to shut down the video shoot due to safety concerns actually happened during filming , just as seen in the video . Hamlyn was almost arrested following a confrontation with the police . According to Avis , the events depicted in the video show what actually happened that day " almost in real time " , and that " getting busted was an integral part of the plan . " Band manager Paul McGuinness revealed in 2007 that much of the confrontation with the police was exaggerated ; the group were hoping to get shut down by the authorities in order to dramatize the music video , but the police continually gave them extensions for shooting the video . In the background of the video is a sign for The Million Dollar Hotel , which was rebuilt to create some interest , in case no one showed up at the film shoot . Although the video is of a live performance , the audio used is from the studio @-@ recorded version of the song . The video won the Grammy Award for Best Performance Music Video at the 1989 Grammy Awards .

= = = B @-@ sides = = =

" Race Against Time " was released on the 12 @-@ inch , cassette , and CD versions of the single . The song developed from the band 's interest in urban funk , and was described by The Edge as " a kind of Afro @-@ rhythmic piece " and " a study in rhythm . " The bass riff in the song , inspired by the bodhrán , was played by The Edge , but stemmed from some of Clayton 's unused bass parts . Mullen 's drum part was recorded in a single take . The song is primarily an instrumental piece but does contain some lyrics inspired by Bono 's trip to Ethiopia after Live Aid and his witnessing firsthand the famine in occurrence ; these lyrical references include Bono singing in an Ethiopian language and following it with the phrase " Race against time " . Bono said of the song , " It reminds me of the desert . The desert is so empty , but it aches with a strange kind of fullness . " John Hutchinson of Musician magazine described the song as having an " African flavour " and as being

reminiscent of Peter Gabriel . The track was used in the Miami Vice episode " Child 's Play " , and is the only one of the single 's B @-@ sides that was never played live .

" Silver and Gold " was written in support of the Artists United Against Apartheid project , which protested the South African apartheid . In 1985 , Bono participated in Steven Van Zandt 's anti @-@ apartheid Sun City project and spent time with Keith Richards and Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones . 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 . It was re @-@ recorded by U2 for the " Where the Streets Have No Name " single while the band returned to Dublin during in May 1987 during a break between the first and second legs of The Joshua Tree Tour . The song was described by Musician as " tough and raw , with Bono in husky and confident voice , underpinned by a sinuous bass line , and with The Edge demonstrating his newfound prowess in blues @-@ based guitar . " " Silver and Gold " was played live on The Joshua Tree Tour several times , one performance of which was featured on the band 's 1988 album and rockumentary , Rattle and Hum . Both the studio recording and the Sun City versions were later featured on the bonus disc of the 20th anniversary edition of The Joshua Tree . The studio version was also included on the limited edition B @-@ sides bonus disk of the band 's first compilation album , The Best of 1980 ? 1990 .

" Sweetest Thing " was written by Bono as an apology to his wife for forgetting her birthday . The song opens with a short piano piece before the rest of the band begins to play . Some of Bono 's lyrics have been described as reminiscent of John Lennon . The Edge described it as " a beautiful song ... which is pop as it should be ? not produced out of existence , but pop produced with a real intimacy and purity " , also noting that " It 's very new for us . " It was re @-@ recorded with some lyrical alterations and released in 1998 as a single in its own right for The Best of 1980 ? 1990 . Hot Press editor Niall Stokes stated that this track , along with " Race Against Time " , is " an indicator of what U2 might have made instead of The Joshua Tree . "

= = Critical reception = =

Upon the release of The Joshua Tree , critics praised " Where the Streets Have No Name " . Steve Morse of The Boston Globe noted the " bell @-@ like tones from the Edge fram [ e ] a search for heaven " and along with the subsequent track on the album , " I Still Haven 't Found What I 'm Looking For " , these songs showed how the group were " pilgrims still on a quest ; not preachers who claim to have found answers " . The Bergen Record echoed these sentiments , saying the tracks demonstrated how the band was on a personal and spiritual quest . Rolling Stone called it " assertive rock " in their review of The Joshua Tree . The San Diego Union @-@ Tribune said of " Where the Streets Have No Name " , " the music charges , like someone fleeing for life " . The Washington Post said the track is " a bit oblique lyrically , but the implications are clear in Bono 's resolute delivery , Dave ( the Edge ) Evan 's quavering guitar , Adam Clayton 's cathedral bass and Larry Mullen 's rolling thunder drums " .

NME lauded the song as the opening track by saying the album " starts by spitting furiously " . The publication praised Bono 's impassioned singing and The Edge 's guitar playing , which transformed the instrument into " something more than an endlessly abused piece of wood " . The review commented that the " last ten seconds are breathtakingly beautiful " . The Rocket wrote that the song builds a " wall of sound " that Bono 's vocals cut through with a " wail of desperation , as the lyrics agonize the need for personal spirituality " . The reviewer compared the opening riff to Simple Minds ' " Ghostdancing " . Reviewing The Joshua Tree , Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic called the song an " epic opener " . The service 's Steve Huey , in a review of the song , praised its " insistent , propulsive rhythmic drive and anthemic chorus " , qualities he singled out for making it a fan favorite . He called the song the " perfect album @-@ opener " , crediting the " slow build of its arrangement toward a climactic peak " . Huey also called Bono 's delivery " passionate and grandiose " and " his commitment to the material unshakable " . He believed the combination of his

vocals and the band 's " sonic power " is what gave U2 its " tremendous force " .

= = Live performances = =

" Where the Streets Have No Name " made its concert debut on 2 April 1987 in Tempe , Arizona on the opening night of The Joshua Tree Tour . It has since been played at nearly every full @-@ length concert that U2 has headlined , totaling over 700 performances as of 2011 . The song is widely regarded as one of the group 's most popular live songs . Bono said of it , " We can be in the middle of the worst gig in our lives , but when we go into that song , everything changes . The audience is on its feet , singing along with every word . It 's like God suddenly walks through the room . "

On The Joshua Tree Tour , " Where the Streets Have No Name " was most often used to open concerts . Fans and critics responded favourably to the song in a live setting . The San Diego Union @-@ Tribune wrote that , " From the lofty sonic opening strains of [ the song ] , this audience was up , ecstatic and inflamed . " NME wrote that the song is one such occasion where " the power afforded their songs is scary " , noting that during the song 's opening , " the arena ERUPTS " . In other reviews , the song was called : " uplifting " , " exhilarating " , and " powerful " . Out of the 109 shows during The Joshua Tree Tour , " Streets " was played at all except 12 of the concerts . During the Lovetown Tour which took place in 1989 and the beginning of 1990 , " Streets " was only left out of the set list at one of the 47 concerts .

The song was performed at every show on the 1992 ? 1993 Zoo TV Tour . Concerts from this tour were elaborate multimedia spectacles that Bono performed as a variety of characters , but for the end of the main set , the group reverted to playing classics , including " Where the Streets Have No Name " , straight . Some of these performances of the song were accompanied by footage of the group in the desert from The Joshua Tree 's photo shoot . The video was speeded up for humorous effect ? NME described the effect as giving it a " silly , Charlie Chaplin quality " ? and Bono often acknowledged his younger self on the video screens . This video would make a return during performances on the 2010 and 2011 legs of the U2 360 ° Tour . Some of the Zoo TV performances of the song had a more electronic dance music arrangement that bore a resemblance to the Pet Shop Boys ' synthpop cover of the song ( titled " Where the Streets Have No Name ( I Can 't Take My Eyes off You ) " ) . Bono parodied this by occasionally adopting the deadpan vocal style used in the Pet Shop Boys ' cover . Critics welcomed the song in the group 's setlist : The Independent said the song " induces instant euphoria , as U2 do what they 're best at , slipping into epic rock mode , playing music made for the arena " . In two other local newspaper reviews , critics praised the song 's inclusion in a sequence of greatest hits .

For the PopMart Tour of 1997 ? 1998 , U2 returned to the electronic dance arrangement they occasionally played on the Zoo TV Tour . The set 's massive video screen displayed a video that Hot Press described as an " astonishing , 2001 @-@ style trip into the heart of a swirling , psychedelic tunnel that sucks the audience in towards a horizontal monolith " . Near the end of the song , peace doves were shown on the screen and bright beams of light flanking the set 's golden arch were projected upwards . Hot Press said the effect transformed the stadium into a " UFO landing site " .

Shortly before the third leg of the Elevation Tour , the September 11 attacks occurred in New York City and Washington D.C. During the band 's first show in New York City following the attacks , the band performed " Where the Streets Have No Name " , and when the stage lights illuminated the audience , the band saw tears streaming down the faces of many fans . The experience was one inspiration for the song " City of Blinding Lights " . The band paid tribute to the 9 / 11 victims during their performance of the song at the Super Bowl XXXVI halftime show on 3 February 2002 . The performance featured the names of the September 11 victims projected onto a large white banner behind the band . U2 's appearance was later ranked number 1 on Sports Illustrated 's list of " Top 10 Super Bowl Halftime Shows " .

For the Vertigo Tour , the group originally considered dropping the song from their setlists , but Mullen and Clayton successfully argued against this . All 131 of the Vertigo Tour concerts featured a

performance of the song , which were accompanied by the stage 's LED video curtains displaying African flags . On the tour 's opening night , this reminded Bono that he had originally written the lyrics in an Ethiopian village . He thought this visual accompaniment made the song come full circle , saying , " And here it was , nearly twenty years later , coming back to Africa , all the stuff about parched lands and deserts making sense for the first time . " The song was also played at the preview screening of the band 's concert film U2 3D at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival . At the Glastonbury Festival 2010 , The Edge accompanied rock band Muse for a live cover version of the track , later playing it with U2 while headlining Glastonbury in 2011 .

Live performances of " Where the Streets Have No Name " appear in the concert video releases Rattle and Hum , Zoo TV : Live from Sydney , and PopMart : Live from Mexico City , as well as the respective audio releases of the latter two concerts , Zoo TV Live and Hasta la Vista Baby ! U2 Live from Mexico City . A second version from the PopMart Tour was featured on Please : PopHeart Live EP , and later on the U.S. " Please " single . A live recording from Boston during the Elevation Tour was featured in the concert film Elevation 2001 : Live from Boston , and on the " Walk On " and " Electrical Storm " singles . The concert video and album U2 Go Home : Live from Slane Castle , Ireland featured another performance from the Elevation Tour , and later performances were featured in the concert films Vertigo 2005 : Live from Chicago and U2 3D ( Vertigo Tour ) , and U2 360 ° at the Rose Bowl ( U2 360 ° Tour ) . The 2004 digital album , Live from the Point Depot , contains a performance from the Lovetown Tour , only available as part of The Complete U2 digital box set .

= = Legacy = =

In 2002 , Q magazine named " Where the Streets Have No Name " the 16th- " most exciting tune ever " . The following year , Q ranked the song at number 459 in a special edition titled " 1001 Best Songs Ever " . Three years later , the magazine 's readers voted the track the 43rd @-@ greatest song in history . Rolling Stone ranked the song at number 28 on its list of the " 100 Greatest Guitar Songs of All Time . " In a 2010 poll by fan site @ U2 , approximately 29 % of 4 @,@ 800 respondents named " Where the Streets Have No Name " as their favourite song from The Joshua Tree , ranking it as the most popular song from the album . In 2010 , American sports network ESPN used the track , among other U2 songs , in commercials for the 2010 FIFA World Cup , with the South African Soweto Gospel Choir adding vocals to the song . The advertisement , titled " Robben Island " , portrays South African political prisoners during the apartheid era forming a soccer team . There are plans to bring a recording of the Soweto @-@ supported performance to retail . Composer John Mackey used the introductory guitar theme in his 2009 piece for wind ensemble , Aurora Awakes . The song 's introduction was used by the Vancouver Canucks hockey team at the start each of their home games , when the players take to the ice . The Baltimore Ravens also use the song as they enter M & T Bank Stadium before home games . The Marquette Golden Eagles men 's basketball team uses this song in their entrance video before all home games at the BMO Harris Bradley Center . The song is also used by the Wisconsin Badgers football team for their entrance video at Camp Randall Stadium prior to all home games . The Kansas Jayhawks men 's basketball team uses the song during their starting lineups at Allen Fieldhouse .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts = =