U2 rocks in 3-D movie

Good camerawork makes it feel like ’being there’ at the 3-D film version of Irish rockers’ Vertigo tour

If you have wondered why bands such as The Rolling Stones and The Black Eyed Peas choose South American venues to shoot concert movies, this film provides the answer: Audiences south of the US are awesome.

They fill every seat in a massive studia, they know the lyrics to all the songs, they are slim, well-dressed and attractive-looking and best of all, there are no drunkards in the front row. You know the type. They are the mullet-coiffed, wife-beater-clad blokes who, when the camera is on them, feel duty-bound to give a heartwarming grin, their fingers making devil horns.

This 85-minute show, shot during U2’s Vertigo tour in 2006, is centred mainly on one appearance in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with footage added from other South American and Australian dates.

A pure concert film, rather than a documentary filled out with behind-the-scenes footage, it strives to put the viewers in the seat in the house, if that seat could fly around the stage. Note, though, that its song selection is the result of editing to fit the film’s running time as well as for artistic reasons.

The song list takes more or less a sampling of their greatest hits, it kicks off with Vertigo, naturally, and includes 1989’s Miss Sarajevo. Then, with only the rare diversion, the classic anthems from the 1980s kick in: New Year’s Day, Sunday Bloody Sunday, Bullet The Blue Sky, Pride (In The Name Of Love), Where The Streets Have No Name and With Or Without You.

Fans of their angry early albums should feel very well served, as the song list leans towards music released before the Irish band (and its lead singer Bono, in particular) felt the need to comment on rock-star problems such as fame and being jaded.

You could say that much of their 1980s output was the same four-chord tune with a dozen variations, but that charge could be laid at the feet of many an anthem band. Still, it is awe-inspiring to note how high they have risen on such limited technical knowledge of music.

For non-fans, though, the four-on-the-floor beat and recurring melodic patterns can make it seem as if the band is playing a very long medley when, in fact, they are all separate songs.

Thankfully, the ’being there’ feeling is maintained throughout, not so much through 3-D but through good, old-fashioned camera work and editing. As the song list proves, the old material often works the best.

You can read more at www.irishtimes.com/entertainment

The audience sang along at the 2006 concert, centred mainly on one show in Buenos Aires, Argentina, while lead singer Bono (below) performed U2 anthems and a sampling of their greatest hits. PHOTOS: SCIENCE CENTRE SINGAPORE

U2
3D Theatre, The lions, Science Centre Singapore

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