

# Reviews

**Patio Furniture**  
 Brian Smith, vocals, keyboards;  
 Ward Mahowald, guitar,  
 keyboards; David Colvin, bass,  
 keyboards, vocals; Michael  
 Bunger, drums.  
 Cow Hop Annex, Thursday, Oct.  
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If this were the early 1980s, Patio Furniture would be called a top-40 cover band. The song list of this local cover band includes many favorites from that time, including songs by the Cars, the Police and the Romantics. Their shows also include U2's "I Will Follow," and Peter Gabriel's "Shock the Monkey," two of the best songs from the early '80s.

However, in 1988, they are better described as a new wave cover band for the most part, as many of the artists they cover are considered a part of the new wave of rock music that followed the punk rock era.

And Patio Furniture does these songs well. Guitarist Ward Mahowald demonstrated himself to be a diverse player, able to play harder-edged pop such as "White Wedding" as well as the smoother guitar styles of the Cure's "Boys Don't Cry."

The strong rhythm section of bassist/keyboardist David Colvin and drummer Michael Bunger is Patio Furniture's greatest strength. Both play loud and keep a solid beat. Colvin also was great on backup vocals. Perhaps he should consider doing a lead or two.

Lead vocalist Brian Smith is a talented singer, but tends to pose a little much, constantly jumping up and down and wiggling his hips like someone needing a trip to the bathroom. There's nothing wrong with a stage presence, but this starts looking plain silly after a while.

Nevertheless, Smith does have a vocal ability absent in some other bands around town. He is best on "Shock the Monkey" and the Romantics' "What I Like About You."

Although much of Patio Furniture's repertoire is drawn from the late '70s and early '80s, they also perform some more recent popular recordings. One of these is R.E.M.'s "The One I Love." This is a great song and Patio Furniture does a respectable version of it. However, given their apparent fondness for the early '80s, it would have been interesting to hear them do an earlier R.E.M. tune, perhaps "Gardening at Night" or "Sitting Still."

They also cover A-Ha's "Take On Me," one of the most horrid songs of 1986. This one could be dropped from the list with no damage done whatsoever.

Review by Shane Hall



Photo by Jay Janner

**Patio Furniture, a new wave cover band performed at the Cow Hop last week. Members include Brian Smith, lead vocalist; David Colvin, bassist and Ward Mahowald, guitarist.**

## "Rattle and Hum" U2

Island Records  
 ★★★★★

An entire book could probably be written to describe U2's new release, "Rattle and Hum." Suffice to say that this is another classic from Bono and crew, containing live recordings, new material and even a few cover tunes.

The live material on "Rattle and Hum" consists of songs from the band's last two albums, "The Joshua Tree" and "The Unforgettable Fire."

"Pride (In the Name of Love)" and "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" are the most impressive of the live tracks. The latter, recorded at Madison Square

Garden in New York, features backing vocals by the New Voices of Freedom. Together with Bono's lead vocals, the song has an almost gospel-like feel. "Pride" features the crowd at McNichols Arena in Denver singing along with Bono. His passion-filled voice, along with the participation of the crowd, makes this, one of U2's best songs, as stirring as ever.

"Desire" is an interesting track with twangy guitar leads by The Edge and a beat by drummer Larry Mullen that recalls the Bo Diddley beat of the 1950s.

The best song here (or at least of the new material) is the band's tribute to John Lennon, "God Part II," which is like a sequel to Lennon's song "God." Bono also takes a shot at sensationalist

biographer Albert Goldman, who published a Lennon biography this year. "I don't believe in Goldman his type like a curse/Instant karma's gonna get him if I don't get him first" (recall Lennon's song "Instant Karma").

"Rattle and Hum" also features three songs recorded at Sun Studios in Memphis, the same place Sam Phillips recorded a young truck driver named Elvis Presley. It seems appropriate that one of the greatest rock bands of the 1980s would record in the place where rock 'n' roll was practically born.

The results are interesting and different from anything U2 has done before. "Angel of Harlem," with the help of the Memphis Horns, is the band's brassy salute to jazz singer Billie Holiday. "When

Love Comes to Town" features U2 with blues legend B.B. King. Bono and King alternate lead vocals.

This recording has a score of other treats as well, including U2's versions of the Beatles' "Helter Skelter" and Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower."

With all the attention given to U2's involvement in social and political causes, "Rattle and Hum," with its cover songs and homages, seems in many ways to be the band's way of reminding us that they are still a rock group. As Bono sings on "God Part II": "I don't believe that Rock 'N' Roll can really change the world/As it spins in revolution spirals and turns/I believe in love."

Review by Shane Hall