

VOL 3 ISSUE 2

EASTER EDITION  
2026

**PROPAGANDA U2**

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# U2 EASTER LILY EP

SONG FOR HAL • IN A LIFE • SCARS  
RESURRECTION SONG • EASTER PARADE  
COEXIST (I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES?)

SLEEVE NOTES FROM THE EDGE • ADAM CLAYTON ON LOUIS LE BROCCQUY  
BONO TALKS WITH FRANCISCAN FRIAR RICHARD ROHR  
LARRY MULLEN JR BEHIND THE LENS & WITH QUESTIONS FOR ANTON CORBIJN  
ADEOLA ON WILDPEACE • JACKNIFE LEE IN THE STUDIO

# U2 PROPAGANDA

EASTER EDITION  
2026

YOU WAIT TWENTY FIVE YEARS for a new edition of Propaganda and then two come along at once. Or eight years for a collection of new U2 songs... and then two come along at once.

First Days of Ash and now Easter Lily. How did this happen? Jackknife Lee, in the studio the entire time under the mistaken impression he was producing a new album, watched events unfold in real time.

'About two weeks ahead of Easter the band said: 'If we're doing a record about the external world at the beginning of Lent, when you do fasting and contemplation and all those things, let's put an Easter EP out on Good Friday that's more about the internal response to things.'

And so it came to pass.

If Days of Ash was fire and fury, Easter Lily is faith, hope and love. Its title is a nod to Patti Smith's 1978 album Easter, while Anton Corbijn's luminous cover shot pays homage to 'Procession with Lillies' by Louis le Brocquy.

If the last EP witnessed a world in trauma, says Edge, this one is more about where the band goes for 'strength to walk through this world.'

'There is a spiritual dimension to this life,' writes Adam, reflecting on his own journey of recovery. 'It's foolish not to have it working for you rather than against you.'

One bridge between the two collections is the notion of coexistence, an idea the band have explored since 2005's Vertigo Tour when Bono adopted a piece of street graffiti for a headband, incorporating the Islamic crescent moon, the Christian cross and the Jewish Star of David.

The logo had been created at a relatively peaceful time, Polish artist Piotr Młodożeniec, tells us. 'I did not know the world was going to go the way it has.'

Do most people get just enough religion to inoculate them against it, asks Bono, in conversation with Franciscan Friar Richard Rohr. 'Or are there ceremonies, rituals, dances that we might be missing in our lives? From the rite of spring to Easter and its promise of rebirth and renewal ...'

After the EPs, the LP, on track to be with us later in the year. 'We're still in the studio' says Bono, 'Still working towards a noisy, messy, 'unreasonably colourful' album to play LIVE... which is where U2 lives... We still look to vivid rock n roll as an act of resistance against all this awfulness on our small screens...'

Martin Wroe  
Propaganda/U2.com  
April 2026

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PROPAGANDA: EASTER ISSUE  
APRIL 2026

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## 'The Songs Are The Boss'

THE EDGE CALLED INTO PROPAGANDA HQ A FEW HOURS AFTER LEAVING THE STUDIO WITH THE BAND JUST FINISHING WORK ON ANOTHER SURPRISE COLLECTION OF SONGS. HE TALKED US THROUGH THE TRACKS ON EASTER LILY ...AND EXPLAINED WHY NOW WAS THE MOMENT FOR THEIR RELEASE.

'IT'S NOT LIKE WE PLANNED ON RELEASING THEM LIKE THIS. IT'S AS IF THE SONGS ARE THE BOSS... THEY'RE KIND OF TELLING US WHAT TO DO.'

DAYS OF ASH dropped on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Christian season of Lent. Six weeks later, on Good Friday, here's Easter Lily. Give us the gospel truth Edge.

There's no doubt this collection of songs have a kind of seasonal bent but I wouldn't get too carried away with the religious calendar here the point is there are ceremonies and rituals some of us are missing in this most material of times .....we wrote some songs meant for our album but they started to assert themselves in some unexpected ways, demanding special attention , their own devotional world , suggesting they didn't feel part of our album So we folded ...agreed to their timeline... which was Easter... 40 days after Ash Wednesday... the songs are the boss , you have to do what they say or they'll abandon you for someone else.

And they had a point. There is a symmetry. If the songs on Days of Ash captured our response to the outside world and the emergencies that keep you awake at night with The Easter Lily EP it's more what's going on in our interior world and asking prayerfully have we the strength to meet the moment personally before we approach the politics.

Take us through the songs on the new EP, which opens with you on lead vocals and **SONG FOR HAL**.

*'You're not alone in the bright blue air  
Not alone if there's no one there at all  
You're not alone if your voice is unheard  
Not alone the song of the mockingbird don't last long  
They appear and then they're gone  
I swear where music is made  
You'll be there...'*

I started writing 'Song for Hal' in the early stages of the Pandemic lockdown in response to the news that we'd lost our dear friend Hal Willner. It's kind of a lament. Hal was a very unique character. He was kind of a cultural alchemist and had a deep and passionate interest in music that wasn't on most people's radar. He loved Thelonious Monk and Disney cartoon songs. The McGarrigle sisters and Kurt Weill. Hal worked with U2 on a few projects and with Gavin Friday and when he passed we all felt it was the end of an era. It was at the height of the first wave of the pandemic. Hal was one of the lucky ones to be with his family but I was struck by how many people, on hospital wards or at home, were isolated from loved ones, and dying on their own. So this is a song of defiance really, and a song of hope, resisting the idea that any of us can be alone in time and space.

I rarely take a lead vocal. When people ask why, I explain that we actually have a great singer in the band. I always imagined Bono would sing the lead, but he felt strongly I should sing it. He liked where it hit my voice. That was a big compliment.

SONG FOR  
IN A  
Lily  
Song  
RESURRECTION  
EASTER  
Prude  
CO-EXIST (I WILL  
Blas  
THE LORD AT ALL TIMES?)

## IN A LIFE

*'I feel alone I need it known  
I never achieved anything on my own  
I feel alone I need it known  
I only received from being shown'*

I started the music for this one on the road. It was just a quick sketch but I knew it had something. It developed so much and to hear it finished is a thrill. Where Bono Adam and Larry took it is amazing. It's my favorite U2 song in years. It's about friendship and while we accept how absurd it is to talk about faith and friendship in such nihilistic times, we are unrepentant... this is emotionally direct which for some will be uncool.

but that's the point... to be confrontational and challenging to the coolness that creeps into relationships Listening to it after 'Song for Hal', I'm reminded not to take friends for granted... none of us know how long we are here... people tell me our music is very emotionally impactful on them. What they don't know is that we get the same feelings when we play the songs. When you hit on something honest and unvarnished it connects.

I can't wait to play this song live.

## SCARS

*'I know, know, know  
All that you've been through  
So I know, know, know  
Who you are, who you are  
Let them show, show, show  
It's your scars that give you beauty  
You're a beauty  
Don't cover your scars'*

We didn't want Scars to be in any way sentimental, so the arrangement is quite tough, reminiscent of the music we first found inspiring in the early 1980s: the post punk era. There's a bit of Siouxsie and the Banshees about it. Adam and Larry are keeping it real here. This is why I love being in a band. I would never have imagined this way to play the song.

The first version of Scars was a song Bono and I were helping Martin Garrix and his team with. It's very different; more in the EDM style and it might be released in the future.

The lyric is about self-acceptance. Scars are helpful, mistakes are helpful - if they can be owned. That's the key.

When they're hidden or denied, that's bad news.

That's the root of narcissism, not self-love but fake perfection. Bono takes this idea someplace else with a reference to the wounds of Christ, reminding us that they were inflicted by the State combined with religious authority. Church and State is a dangerous combo.

## RESURRECTION SONG

*'One time we had a lot of miles to go  
Road sign, the death and resurrection show  
You smile, the next thing you know, we died'*

*Next life was waiting through an open door  
You said it's better than the one before  
Last night you promised the sun would rise'*

This music track has been waiting a long time for its moment in the sun. The first demo was made with Jacknife over 10 years ago. I was trying for a song with some uplift in its DNA. The band took it to a whole new level. Larry is playing some of the best drums he's ever recorded on this track. He is on fire right now.

Lyrically it is a road trip song. There is a bit of a tongue in cheek aspect;

*'All these signs to forever / Have we got heaven for you/ Or you can go to hell together...* is a reference to bumper sticker Christianity, or billboard Christianity.

The death and resurrection show is a show biz reference. A swipe at ourselves, which is important. "Til death dies too" was its original title .some bumper stickers are better than others !

Fundamentally it's defiance against cynicism, cynicism with religion that might be understandable. "If love is in the air let's take a breath, If I sound ridiculous I'm not done yet". We know it defies logic. But we don't let that bother us.

As Carl Sagan said. "The Cosmos is within us. We are made of star-stuff. We are a way for the Universe to know itself." It's already kind of ridiculous that we exist.

The challenge to any of us is, 'can we get over ourselves?'

## EASTER PARADE

*'On such a day, such a day as this  
On such a day, such a day  
Something in me died  
But I was no longer afraid  
Easter parade  
Easter parade'*

Bono and Jacknife saved the day on this one. My original demo was a straight ahead guitar anthem but ultimately unsurprising. A bit of a retread of older U2 ideas. We had to totally deconstruct the track and now it's got this really unique journey. Surprising yourself and your audience is so vital to keeping things fresh. The lyric took a few turns but became this kind of emblem for the EP. It's an offering.

Faith has to involve doubt. For us, shaped by the Christian tradition, it's all wrapped up in Easter, in the mystery of the death and resurrection FULL STOP. We've explored these ideas before - back in the day with 40 or with Yahweh. It's a rich tradition which some of our favorite artists have mined - Johnny Cash, Bob Marley, Patti Smith - but still, to talk about the spiritual nature of songs like this it's easy to bump into cliches.

These songs are personally revealing but definitely not prescriptive - they're about where we go, about what works for us. The songs we feel compelled to write to help make sense of it all.

I guess the question is, why these songs of transcendence now? Our hunch is that our audience is as hungry as we are for something to hold onto in these difficult times. We don't write songs which shy away from witnessing a world in its trauma, its rage and pain and in these more spiritual songs we bear witness to the source of the strength we have found to walk through this world.

## COEXIST (I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES?)

*'The tide is rising, all ships are sinking  
New poets must despise all old ways of thinking  
Whoever made language must've been drinking  
Twenty-six characters own all the ink and printing  
I got so many words in my head but I can't find the lines  
I will bless the Lord at all times'*

We started this one with Brian Eno. It was a Bono riffing over these beautiful chords from Brian.

Bono and Jacknife Lee revisited the track and like a jazz man Bono went all out. Totally unbridled. I had very little to do with this track but it's one of my favorite pieces of music we have made recently.

Coexist is the idea at the center of this lyric. That religion has become a reason to go to war is crazy to us. It's easy to fall into despair - there's so much to be fearful of, not least because as we succumb to war, we are not doing enough to combat truly existential threats like the climate emergency.

## Can you imagine U2 ever writing a song about the environment?

I wouldn't rule it out but we would want to be able to say something that was helpful not just add to the doom and gloom. I take heart in the perspective of a brilliant friend, the scientist and ecologist Tom Crowther. In his book, Nature's Echo, Tom talks about the role of feedback loops - negative feedback loops or positive feedback loops. When we go down the rabbit hole of despair and despondency, particularly if you are processing it all in isolation, we end up in a negative feedback loop, driving ourselves towards a self-fulfilling dystopian prophecy.

But if we connect with other people in a positive, proactive way we can start a positive feedback loop that can actually move the needle in the right direction. This is how movements start that can change the direction of the world and solve problems that might seem unsolvable.

## You still believe the three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, can coexist?

Coexist might seem a ridiculous idea right now. The fact that it is makes it even more compelling and vital. As they say the night is darkest just before the dawn. ■

## ‘A Sense of Community...’

**Adam reflects on ‘Procession with Lilies’ by the revered Irish painter Louis le Brocqy, and how it inspired the imagery and lyrical themes in the Easter Lily EP.**

Louis le Brocqy sits as one of Ireland’s major modern artists. He was a friend of Francis Bacon and, born in 1916, lived and worked during a period of European history, where war had redrawn the map of everything.

I acquired a le Brocqy head in 1990. I believe it is a self-portrait. The band also gifted me an important tapestry for my 40th birthday. We all knew Louis and his wife, Anne Madden, during their life in Dublin and France.

‘Procession with Lilies’ is a favourite painting of Bono and his lifelong friend Guggi. As teenagers they would visit it on many trips to the National Gallery of Ireland, when it was on loan for public display. The work is based on a photograph cut out from the Evening Press on 16th June 1939, a few weeks after the publication of Finnegans Wake by James Joyce. The cutting shows a group of young girls in white First Communion dresses, coming around a corner, laughing and carrying white lilies.

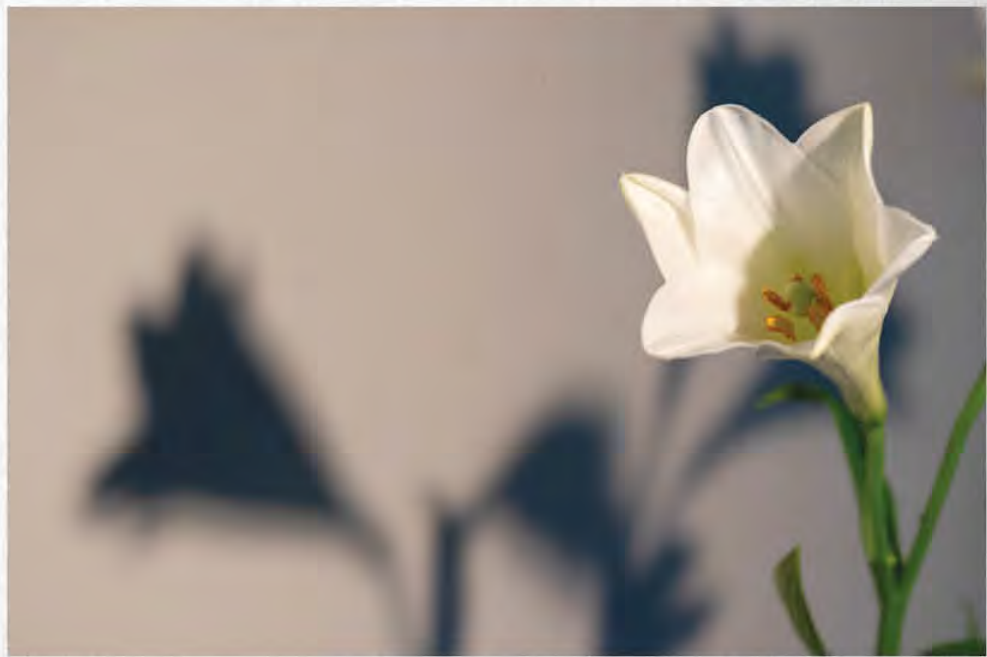
The painting reflects aspects of Irish rural life and religious ritual, particularly Catholic processions. Le Brocqy transforms the scene into something timeless and symbolic. His figures are elongated and stylised, they lack detailed facial features and are closely grouped, merging into each other. The white lilies stand out against the muted tones of the painting.

The painting also portrays a duality of celebration and mourning. In that, it reflects on a sense of community over individuality and the idea of a shared human experience. It is for these reasons that when Bono was exploring the themes of the Easter Lily EP, this work played a significant role in inspiring the expression that what we need is to seek community as we face into an uncertain world. How we react is ultimately up to us. We may choose to be overwhelmed by the chaos or choose to celebrate in community the freedom we possess, albeit limited in some instances.

Thus, working to resurrect ourselves from this collective trauma of chaos. I choose to celebrate any hard won personal and collective freedom at this time, when others are deliberately and openly trying to take it away. ■



THIS IMAGE IS A PAINTING TITLED RIVERRUN: PROCESSION WITH LILIES BY THE RENOWNED IRISH ARTIST LOUIS LE BROCQUY. CREATED IN THE 1980S, IT BELONGS TO HIS PROCESSION SERIES.



PHOTOGRAPH OF A TRUMPET LILY, 2026 BY ANTON CORBIJN.

**Anton Corbijn has created the striking cover image of the Easter Lily EP. Very few people have been shooting photos of U2 for longer than Anton, but Larry is one of them. In this issue of Propaganda, Larry has shared some of his own shots of the band from the recording studio. We asked Larry for three questions to put to Anton.**

**Propaganda: Who's your favourite member of U2?**

*Anton: I'd probably say Larry.*

**Propaganda: Anton, as a drum aficionado yourself, who's your favourite drummer?**

*Anton: I'm going to have to go for Larry.*

**Propaganda: Who would you say is the most photogenic member of U2?**

*Anton: No contest... that's Larry.*



OOA



OOA



OOA

# EASTER EGG FRIAR HUNT

## A CONVERSATION BETWEEN BONO AND FR. RICHARD ROHR

A FEW DAYS BACK BONO JUMPED ON THE LINE TO HIS FRIEND, FATHER RICHARD ROHR, THE FRANCISCAN FRIAR AND BESTSELLING AUTHOR WHO LEADS THE CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO.

IN A CHAT FOR PROPAGANDA – ALSO TO BE AIRED ON U2 X-RADIO (SIRIUS XM) – THEIR TALK RANGED FROM THE CATHEDRAL STILLNESS OF SILENT WOODED VALLEYS TO THE CINEMATIC STAINED-GLASS AND SMOKE-BOMB WONDER OF NOTRE DAME; FROM PAUL SIMON'S PILFERING OF ANCIENT TEXTS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT OF ANARCHY; FROM THE DARK OF THE NIGHT TO A RESURRECTION DAWN.

**RICHARD HAS BEEN A FRIEND** of the band for many years. They've visited him at his hermitage in Albuquerque, and several times he's been to see them play on tour. Richard's most recent book, *The Tears of Things*, was the inspiration behind the song of the same name on the band's *Days of Ash* EP. What follows is an abbreviated version of a longer conversation, edited for Propaganda by Brian Draper.

**Bono:** What's the story, Albuquerque? The saint of New Mexico who lives on Mystic Avenue. The desert father who knows God is our mother. He can read the divine truth in a book of scripture or find it in the book of nature! Father Richard Rohr – Richard – thank you for letting us rob your book title for our song *The Tears of Things*.

**RR:** I was honoured, I was honoured. Thank you.

**Bono:** Can I ask you, oh great Franciscan friar – are you, yourself, fed up with religion? Would you prefer it if your following of Jesus was called by some other name? And is there any evidence that Jesus ever wanted a church set up in his name? I mean, he was pretty radical, wasn't he, and didn't seem to like religious people very much. Just sayin'...

**RR:** You know, that's so obvious in the text. It's amazing, our power to forget it! Jesus was most critical of religion. And yet we made an industry out of him, and every denomination seems to repeat the pattern.

So in answer to your question, I've been tempted hundreds of times to dis-identify with organised religion. And yet I realise something great is hiding inside of its crevices. So I always come back.

**Bono:** I agree with you, that there's something there. I was at a wedding a couple of years ago and was very surprised by how the couple seemed quite devout. They kneeled down and the ceremony went off and I said to the mother of the bride, 'I didn't know they were so religious!' And she said, well, the ceremony has been honed over hundreds of years and it's very hard to improve – there's a distillation that brings you closer to your vows rather than further away.

What do you find? Is it ceremony? Is it ritual? Does that still hold a mystery or unfold a mystery for you?

**RR:** Let me try this: there has to be something that says there is ultimate coherence. 'As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,' as we used to say.

The trouble is we've held our belief in coherence too rigidly, too righteously, always making sacrificial lambs of somebody so we could have it. And that's what the world has surely tired of. So that same belief also has to make room for incoherence.

**Bono:** Growing up in Ireland in the Sixties would make you more than a little sceptical of religion. But I don't like these other warm and fuzzy words like 'spirituality', either. I don't know why. Without wanting you to be my agony aunt/uncle, what do you do if the very vocabulary of religion makes you feel a little nauseous?

Or another way to frame this question: Would you agree most people get just enough religion to inoculate them against it?

**RR:** To inoculate them?

**Bono:** Yeah, people who've had a bad time of being in a church, whatever faith it is – and 'bad' could range from just boring right to oppressive – they've had just enough religion to go, 'I can't go there again.'

How do we find a new vocabulary in which we can approach this subject of God? Because for some people, just going on a hike, just going into the cathedral of a valley or woodland, is where they have a conversation with who they may call God.

**RR:** More and more! The early Franciscans, built on Francis himself, seemed to believe that nature was the first Bible – that God had spoken already through what is. That's said in Romans 1:20 directly. Everything that we need to know about God is written in the natural world.

But our left-brain rigidity made religion untasteful, righteous, rigid. We're coming out of that now, but in the meantime have

BONO AND FR RICHARD, ALBUQUERQUE NM, NOVEMBER 2018.

created a whole world of cynics. The right believes in its formulas, and the left believes in nothing.

**Bono:** I like your phrase, 'Nature is the one song of praise that never stops singing.'

For people out on a walk this Easter Sunday who don't believe death died that day, who don't believe they can meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus and have that personal encounter, do you think, out there in the woods, by the sea, in a place of contemplation, cherishing the natural world, people can hear God whisper?

I remember the story of Elijah being told to go up into a cave, where God would speak to him. He hears a rumble, and he thinks, oh, this must be God coming to speak to me. The earth shakes, and he goes to the edge of the cave, but it's not God. And then the sky lights up, and he thinks, God is going to speak to me. Finally, after earth, wind and fire, he's sitting there wondering if God ever wanted to speak to him in the first place – and in 'the still, small voice', he hears God speak to him.

When I was researching my book *Surrender*, I looked at some different translations and found out that 'the still, small voice' also translates as 'the sound of silence'. And I thought, oh my God, Paul Simon has robbed his best lyric from the sacred text! I just was so envious of this master that he found this line, if he did.

But do you think that when people are out just quietly in meditation, allowing the natural world to speak to them, they can hear God's voice, that 'still, small voice'?

**RR:** I think, all things being equal, your chances are much better of meeting a non-ideological God, a God that can only be defined by presence or silence. Or love, or mystery. We haven't been given a great taste for mystery. One strength – forgive me – that we Catholics have, that you Protestants don't tend to develop, is a patience for darkness, for not knowing. For 'the dark night'. Protestants don't have much teaching on the dark night. And if you don't balance knowing with not knowing – and being comfortable with not knowing – you're headed on a righteous road.

**Bono:** Look, I had a Catholic father and a Protestant mother, and I consider myself to this day a mixed-up kid – but I certainly was schooled early in my life by the scripture, and I still go to the Gospel and the sacred text. It's where I meet Jesus, where I hear the voice of God strongest.

**RR:** Good, good.

**Bono:** But I'm also aware that we can't approach the subject of God without metaphor. It's just – it's ridiculous.

**RR:** Of course!

**Bono:** And so I'm looking for those metaphors. That's why art – musicians, composers, songwriters, filmmakers – we're engaged in those different conversations towards truth. I'm more Catholic than you think!

**RR:** Oh, you are!

**Bono:** And by the way, Father Rohr, I find myself equally as comfortable – or uncomfortable – in the back of a cathedral or a little house church or a Quaker meeting. I spent a good hour with my missus, with Ali, in Notre-Dame cathedral just the other weekend. And we went back for – is it Vespers, in the evening, when they have the Gregorian chant?

**RR:** Yes!

**Bono:** It was an extraordinary thing when I realised that the Catholics definitely have the best stage gear. You've got the smoke bombs, you're the glam rock of religion, as my mate Gavin Friday says! But also I realised the cinematic quality of being in this cathedral.

The stained glass is the birth of cinema – light projected through colour, telling stories for people who couldn't read. I realised that Catholics are the greatest storytellers in terms of cinema. No wonder the Renaissance happened in Italy! No wonder all these lives were given life on canvas by light and colour and shade and dimension. So I'm 'catholic' in the full sense of the word. Wholeness. Awe.

**RR:** The universal, yes. The trouble is we became more Roman than Catholic. We forgot the meaning of the word catholic: 'universal'. It's just like the Eastern Church became more Greek than Orthodox. We over-identified with the ethnicity of our group.

**Bono:** In reading your book *The Universal Christ*, we find your insights into the natural world. In *Breathing Under Water*, we find your insights into the Twelve Steps (and in this same issue of *Propaganda*, Adam Clayton speaks about his own moment of surrender). Your books distill your life's enquiries very, very well – you've no idea how we cherish you in our band.

But I remember you and I once spoke about being in school. The members of U2 had a kind of experience we couldn't explain. It was a non-religious school, and in Ireland that was a big deal. Yet we encountered something, we felt something in the air. And you told me that you also had an experience of a 'God incident' in a school? Was that after you became a priest?

**RR:** Yes, yes. That's what the Pentecostals and Jesus called 'the baptism of fire and the Spirit'. There's knowing, there's believing – and there's really knowing and really believing. There's baptism by water, and much of the church is formed by people who have the water right, but never the fire and spirit. That's what's aging us, making us boring and unattractive.

**Bono:** You're a very attractive man at any age, let me tell you! But yes, the institutions of religion are sometimes not aging well because they're implacable, they don't seem to move.

I was attracted to this idea, when I was young, of anarchy. I always thought there was an anarchic Spirit, you know? The Holy Spirit is described as a wind: 'No one knows where it came from. No one knows where it's going.' I love that idea. It's the opposite to organisation and religion.

It has to be said, we also had experiences that looked a little bit like lunacy, and people who were very extrovert were throwing themselves around the room like they'd been bitten by a snake – or they were trying to bite a snake, I don't know. But they and others were genuinely moved at a deep spiritual level.

**RR:** That's it, that's great. Yes.

**Bono:** And I really felt that. In Ireland it was called the charismatic movement, and it was both Protestant and Catholic, and went across the different faiths.

And in America you had a kind of hippie movement that was touched by it. Incredible people like Kris Kristofferson were talking about their faith – he was a Rhodes scholar, a student of William Blake, and here he is writing these songs like *Help Me Make it Through the Night*. And you felt the Spirit move at that point. That's exactly the same time as it touched us. 1974 or 1975 – around that time.

When did this happen with you?

**RR:** Well, I grew up little by little being exposed to deeper mystery. But it was when I was preaching to a group of teenage boys on the night of 8th November 1971. I certainly didn't consider myself Pentecostal – I was raised with good 'liberation theology'.

But these boys sitting on the floor in front of me began, believe it or not, singing in tongues. Spontaneously. It's never happened to me since. It happened that one night, and everything came from that. But it led me personally to a level of new belief, new expansive belief. It was not angry, it was not rebellious. It was comforting. It was universal. It was lovely.

**Bono:** Recently there was some kind of movement 'in the Spirit' on an American campus [Asbury University], and it didn't look that scary snake-oil type of Pentecostal carry-on,

but people couldn't stop singing, and they made this most beautiful sound and beautiful harmonies.

Look, what you've just described, we in U2 just call rehearsals... or improvisation.

**RR:** Yes!

**Bono:** Ask any jazz man, you know? It's not just John Coltrane. So many of the great composers, whether they believed in

God or not, had to have faith that when they jumped from one note, they would land on another. That's kind of speaking in tongues, I would have thought – when you're singing and your spirit is singing. For me, being on stage, I still love to improvise. You rediscover a song.

I remember, at the time, in Mount Temple Comprehensive, when there was some kind of revival, I think is the word for it – and we were certainly touched by that revival. I remember a wise owl, some wise person saying: 'Too much of the Bible

teaching and you dry up. Too much of the Holy Spirit of fire and you blow up. But the right combination of them both – you grow up.'

**RR:** That's good, that's good!

**Bono:** You like that?

**RR:** I do. It's hard to find that sweet spot. Because we've been so marked by history and the ravages of history and the excesses of history, each in our own 'nationality' way. I don't know how we're going to be able to meet a universal Christ who speaks in many tongues and is still the same God – we're trying to get there, but certainly America, in its incoherence, presently isn't a very good hope.

**Bono:** I'd like to talk about the fact that your centre in Albuquerque is titled the Center for Action and Contemplation, and I know you chose that order carefully. One would usually expect 'contemplation' to come before 'action', but I know that you see actions as a key part of faith. For you they are very important.

Jesus says 'Love thy neighbour' and it's not advice, it's a command. Through various parables, he's very clear on where we draw the line at neighbour, and it's not an ethnicity or a national line of demarcation – it's whoever you chance upon. Could you talk to us about actions as an expression of faith, and on 'Who is your neighbour'?



THE BAND AND FR RICHARD, MALIBU.

**RR:** Well, let's try another word than 'action', because a lot of people think I'm talking about activism. We're having 'No Kings' rallies all over the United States, and a lot of our people are at those rallies, and I support them. But it's what you do that's important. It's not what you say, not what you ritualise, not what you think you believe – but how you act that matters.

So we find Jesus idealising Samaritans, centurions, lepers, outsiders of every sort who do it right. They do it right. We have to look for a Christianity that emphasises doing first – and until you've 'done', you don't have a lot to contemplate at any depth.

So I put contemplation second with great deliberateness. There's a great danger – and I see this in a lot of my contemplative brothers and sisters – of thinking that being pious and interior and private and personal is the answer. But there's no social dimension.

A full religious experience includes my story (my interior awakening), and our story (the group I'm a part of). But then that's relativised by other people's story, too. It's taken us a long time to get to – other people's story. It's then, and only then, that can you get to 'The Story'.

So:

*My story,  
Our story,  
Other people's story –  
The story.*

If your religion leads you to honour all levels, you've probably got a healthy religion. Very few people are exposed to that. But if you can hold on to each of the three, then you open up to 'The Story' – the patterns that are always true. Always true.

And what Jesus seems to be saying – and I happen to agree with him – is, 'Everything is dying and resurrecting.' Everything, everything. The only universal pattern is death and resurrection. And his life, in this Holy Week, is saying, 'Trust it, trust it. Allow it. Be it.' Death and resurrection. That's our universal pattern.

**Bono:** Well my – our – prayer this Easter, is that you and the Center for Action and Contemplation feel a renewed strength, renewed energy, renewed sense of purpose. And I join you in this prayer because the United States are somewhat dis-united in these times. So I pray that we learn to coexist better and that we can be one but not the same.

And really in this moment of grave danger in the world –

**RR:** It is, it really is –

**Bono:** In a moment of grave danger, I pray that in schools and colleges, in car parks, in malls and wherever else younger people are gathered, they might experience what we in U2

bumped into, and you as a teacher bumped into and were somewhat carried by.

And even though I know others in the band feel differently to me, and felt a little bruised by it, I feel that some of the fire that's in our music, some of the charisma that's in our music, goes back to those times. We really need such a revival.

All I can speak about is this Jesus, this radical message – which is still hard even to get your head around – that we are all equal. None are more equal. We are all equal in the eyes of God. And when asked for his greatest hits, you would imagine Jesus would say, 'Ah, come on' – but he goes, 'Yeah, I'll give you my greatest hits...

'Love God. And love your neighbour as you love yourself. In these three are all the laws.'

And I am sure of that. But that's not easy to pull off. So whoever out there is struggling, I pray that your struggle brings you to somewhere safe.

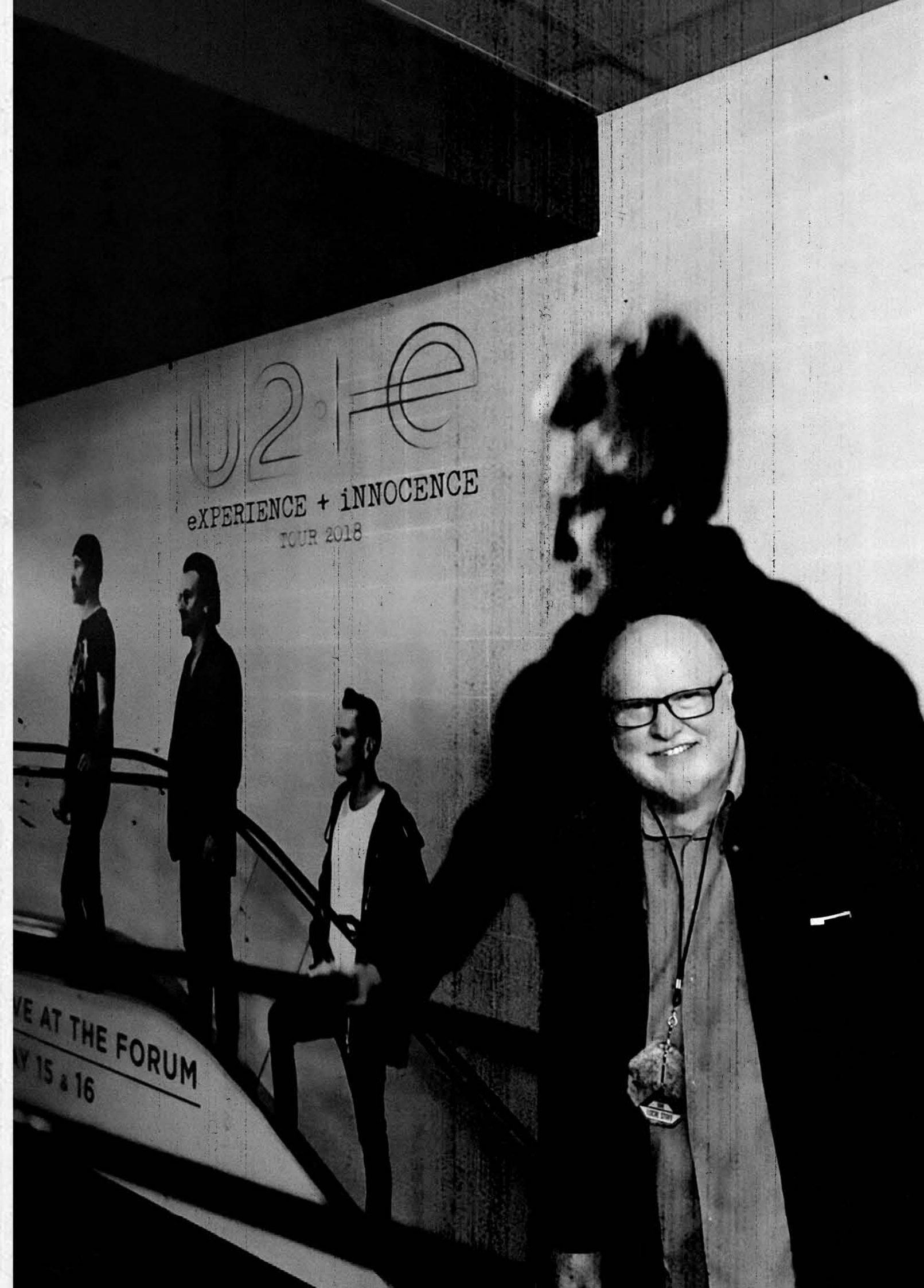
Richard, would you have a prayer for us this Easter? For everyone, all our Propaganda readers around the world, and people listening on Sirius Radio? This might be a moment, without sounding like a good telly evangelist. Might you bring us home with a prayer?

**RR:** Thank you for your humble trust. Let me try. I know you'll recognise this as a scripture from Ephesians:

May we know the height, may we know the depth, may we know the length, may we know the fullness of divine love. And may we be satisfied with nothing less for ourself and all of humanity. Amen.

**Bono:** Amen. Thanks, thank you so much Richard. We love you so much. ■

Center for Action and Contemplation: [www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org)



**SONG FOR**

# Hal

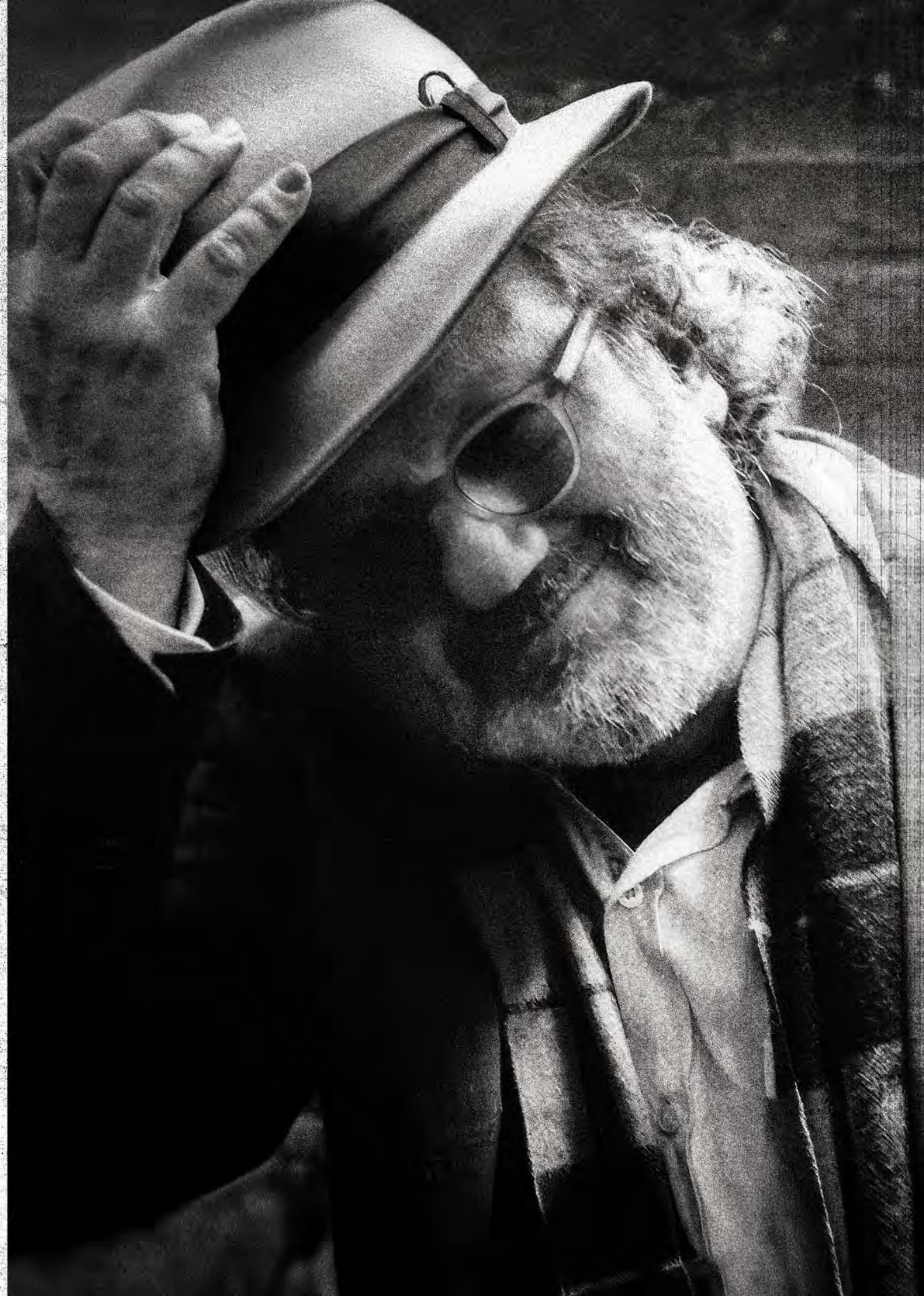
*Did you hear "Forever"?  
Was it playing soft and low?  
It's not a song you wanna hear  
If you're not ready to go*

*You're not alone in the bright blue air  
Not alone if there's no one there at all  
You're not alone if your voice is unheard  
Not alone the song of the mockingbird don't last long  
They appear and then they're gone  
I swear where music is made  
You'll be there*

*And as the morning light  
Stretches out across the floor  
Can't believe it's another day  
And life goes on like it did before*

*You're not alone when you're on your knees  
Not alone if no one sees you fall  
You never took a curtain call  
And you are not alone when you close your eyes  
And slip into a dream that takes you to the other side  
Of the songs in your head  
Dizzy as a musical  
Stupid songs you can't forget  
Beyond pretty, beyond beautiful  
Wherever the strange is on parade  
Wherever the music is made  
You'll be there*

*Did you know he is close to God  
Who makes his old friends laugh?  
Did you know Hal the magician?  
I watched him disappear from a photograph*





## 'YOU'RE NOT ALONE IN THE BRIGHT BLUE AIR...'

**U2 EASTER LILY OPENS WITH 'SONG FOR HAL' IN MEMORY OF THE MUSICIAN AND PRODUCER HAL WILLNER. HAL OFTEN WORKED WITH THE BAND OVER THE YEARS, MOST RECENTLY ON BANG A GONG (GET IT ON) FOR THE T-REX TRIBUTE ALBUM ANGELHEADED HIPSTER.**

**HERE, HAL'S FRIEND AND U2'S CREATIVE DIRECTOR, THE SONGWRITER AND PERFORMER GAVIN FRIDAY, RECALLS THIS 'METAL GURU... WHO UNDERSTOOD THAT INNOCENCE AND DELIRIUM BELONG TOGETHER', AND INTRODUCES SOME OF HAL'S FINEST RECORDS.**

**IT WAS IN THE SUMMER OF 1987** in New York City that I first met Hal Willner.

**Chris Blackwell** from Island Records suggested Hal as producer for my yet-to-be debut solo album *Each Man Kills The Thing He Loves*.

Chris suggested we hang out and see if we get on... get on would be an understatement. We both imploded/exploded in a non-stop spontaneous combustion of surreal conversation that ended up with us both being kicked out of SOB's, the Brazilian night club, at five in the morning.

I'd never met a man who spoke the same language as myself – that almost surreal, nonsensical, inarticulate speech of the heart that some of us have engraved on our hearts.

A language that was born from being saved, or should I say redeemed, by Music/Art.

We were worlds apart but so similar. Hal was born in Philadelphia, the son of two concentration camp survivors; a Jewish kid who never fit in until he found Music.

Me? The hurt Catholic boy in the cul-de-sac from the gloomy Northside in 70s Dublin, who also found he was not alone when Music came into my life.

Music, my best and lifelong friend since the age of 12... nothing that

extraordinary for so many young teenagers who felt lost or alone, and gravitated towards music or the arts in those days. All the freaks, the outsiders, the don't-fit-in and didn't-want-to-fit-in teenagers... hence the name Virgin Prunes, and my Lypton Village friends, whom I met when I was 14.

It was then that the Alone became a Gathering, a Family, a Village called Lypton. How lucky and blessed as we all were to find each other, and Music was the Glue and the Essence of our Friendship.

We joined a Gang and never left and now, with the release of the U2 Easter Lily EP and its opening track, *Song for Hal*, it's the Alone that The Edge hones in on.

*'You're not alone in the bright blue air  
Not alone if there's no-one there at all  
You're not alone if your voice is unheard,  
Not alone the song of the mockingbird don't last long  
They appear then they're gone  
I swear where music is made you'll be there...'*

An empathic song of resistance to the idea of being 'alone' that captures, I believe, the 'core' of Hal's Spirit. Hal was the ultimate alchemist, a beautiful, sensitive, chaotic ringmaster who didn't just produce records – he directed movies for the ears.

Meeting him in that smoky NYC haze in '87 changed my life in many ways, mainly because he saw and felt the beauty in my madness... like kindred spirits, we both knew that magic lies in the margins of Brecht and Weill, along with the rock 'n' roll filth and anger of Punk.

Hal, the saviour of lost songs, a pirate captain navigating us through Rogue's Galleries, always searching for the truth beneath the veneer.

I still find it heartbreaking that Hal is no longer with us – truly this world gone wrong is so much quieter and a little less weird. I so miss him.

He was my musical touchstone, my Metal Guru, and Christ do I miss his weekly phone calls... Hal was a true maverick who understood that innocence and delirium belong together. God Bless you, Hal. The circus continues but it's not the same without you. ■



## 'BEAUTIFUL AND MAD MAGICIAN'

**GAVIN FRIDAY INTRODUCES A SELECTION OF HAL WILLNER'S MANY INFLUENTIAL RECORDINGS.**

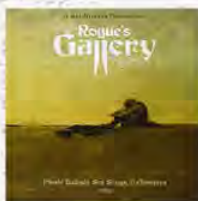
'To talk about Hal's music is virtually impossible as he was so eclectic, random and blatantly A-Z and back again.

But I've had a bash talking about some of his many recordings. The imagery that accompanies my words on Hal are from his own personal studio, a small, dingy room he rented for years near Times Square on 42nd Street, where his insane collection of albums, books and video tapes, along with clowns, ventriloquist dummies and puppets – like his Music – gives ya a sneak MRI view into the mind of this beautiful and mad magician... love ya Hal x

Gavin almost on a Good Friday 2026

### ROGUE'S GALLERY: PIRATE BALLADS, SEA SONGS AND CHANTEYS

Hal's Tribute to Sea Chantys and Pirate Songs is a full on chaotic, bawdy, rowdy, freewheeling, ballsy but often tender affair... mixing authentic folk ballads with punk rock's visceral energy and theatricality... the album originally suggested by Gore Verbinski and Johnny Depp, stemming from Pirates of the Caribbean, but in the hands of Willner, the Pirate Ships ended up more like the Raft of Medusa as in Rum, Sodomy and the Lash. Stand-out contributions from Nick Cave, Tom Waits, Gavin Friday, Bryan Ferry and Bono.



### LOST IN THE STARS: THE MUSIC OF KURT WEILL

My own personal introduction to Hal Willner. Kurt Weill being one of my favourite composers, I came across the Tribute Album in late 1985, and was mystified by how eclectic the whole affair was, from the beautiful jazz of Charlie Haden on Speak Low to the perverse Tom Waits take on What Keeps Mankind Alive?, still my favourite interpretation of that Threepenny Opera tune... I was smitten... love at first listen... little did I know that in less than three years, I would be in the studio recording with Willner myself.



### STAY AWAKE: VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF MUSIC FROM VINTAGE DISNEY FILMS

Possibly my favourite of Hal's Tribute Albums. Who else could embrace the Music of Walt Disney and bring it to such a profound and surreal place, a musical version of Hal's good friend Ralph Steadman's Disney Drawings. Children's Songs that once were carefree, fickle and fun become deeply profound and emotional. Sinéad O'Connor's One Day My Prince Will Come, for example, makes the simple fairytale song a dark, haunting and beautiful heartbreaker. Hearing the narrative voice of Ken Nordine for the first time scaring the life outta ya, not to mention Waits' incredible take on Snow White's Heigh Ho (The Dwarfs' Marching Song). Musically on this album, Hal captures that strangeness that only David Lynch could do cinematically, something Hal took even further when he put together the Live Show of the album - The Forest of No Return... Hal bravely goes where no man dares.



### HAL WILLNER PRESENTS WEIRD NIGHTMARE: MEDITATIONS ON MINGUS

This album I know was very close to the heart of Hal himself, maybe from the fact that it nearly broke his heart during its making. Hal entered the world of Fellini, where he went for making the Jazz of the great Charlie Mingus, as close to a dream as possible. Using the surreal and otherworldly instruments of Harry Partch, he went to capture the spirit of Mingus's Music – not the Jazz, more the Jizz of his dreamlike world. It is a haunting work, more evocative of a soundtrack. The recording of the Harry Partch instruments was beyond a challenge for Hal, but in some sense it captured the essence that was Willner. Beautiful, Mediative and Weird.



### ANGELHEADED HIPSTER: THE SONGS OF MARC BOLAN & T.REX

Hal's final work. He passed away not long after the album's completion. I reckon it was the almost Tolkienesque fairytale bubblegum of Bolan's writing that enchanted Hal. In my world, there is very little that the music of Marc Bolan could do wrong – as I always say, my first kiss at the age of 11 was to Bang A Gong (To Get It On)... and here U2 give it a potent sexy new life, along with Elton John also banging the gong. It's an Epic of an Album as Bolan's Music spoke to all involved in so many different ways. I'd say most of the contributors would have been teenage fans of T.Rex thence, the beautiful and evocative respect that their interpretations hold musically and, especially, vocally. I so wanted to cover The Soul of My Suit but Hal insisted I do The Leopards. He always gave me the oddballs to throw into the mixture, deliberately so... I did manage to tip my hat and squeeze a tad of Soul of My Suit in there either way. Angelheaded Hipsters, for all you who never heard of Hal's music, is a very great place to start.



### ECSTASY - LOU REED

One of Lou Reed's unsung heroes of an album. The first Lou album Hal produced, and Lou's final album that is not a collaboration. The force and honesty of this album is beyond Fierce... Rock Minuet and Baton Rouge, along with the title track, are up there with the greatest of Lou Reed songs. Hal and Lou were inseparable friends. They met late in life, which is probably good for the world... ha!... just thinking of the other collaborations of Hal and Lou here... Lulu with Metallica, and The Raven with a cast of many... not sure the world would be able to cope with too many Lou Reed/Hal Willner works.



### STRANGE WEATHER - MARIANNE FAITHFULL

Marianne's beautiful return, post-rehab, and what an album. Strange Weather is a dark, cabaret cocktail of blues, rock and chanson, so beautifully and sensitively recorded. Bill Frisell... who dare I say was Hal's favourite of all guitarists... Frisell's delicate musical atmospheric play beautiful contrast to Marianne's vocals, her world-weary gravel is so evocative it's heartbreaking. A truly beautiful album with Boulevard of Broken Dreams being my favourite.



### EACH MAN KILLS THE THING HE LOVES - GAVIN FRIDAY AND THE MAN SEEZER

My debut solo album, with the songs I wrote with Maurice Seezer, the title track putting music to the words of Oscar Wilde, alongside cover versions of Brel and Bob Dylan and a collection of personal torch songs. Three years or so after the album was released, Hal entered rehab for addiction issues, and said to me when he was clean that it was Each Man Kills the Thing He Loves that got him through rehab. Take it as ya want but I take it as a compliment, and songs like Another Blow on the Bruise deal with the hurt we rarely talk about...



# INA *Life*

*I'll meet you in the air  
I'll meet you with the fare  
On the Underground  
Wherever you be found  
I'll meet you there  
I'll meet you in time  
I'll meet you cruel or kind  
The heart weighs a ton if you need someone  
And they're standing on the platform  
But it's the other side*

*I'll meet you in the air  
I'll meet you when you're not there  
The shopping list of all you missed  
Let's go there  
I'll meet you in the surreal  
I'll meet you in the joy you steal  
Stones and sticks you're kicking the pricks  
And still I'm learning how to kneel  
Or what not to feel*

*And when we reach the Circle line  
And when we stop the clocks stopping time  
To wake up an unforgiving son  
Wake in the dream that overcomes  
In a life we get a taste of it all  
In a life*

*I'll meet you in the air  
I'll meet you when you don't care  
In the empty space that occupies your place  
I'll meet you there  
A penny on the track  
We ran and get it back  
The driver on the train  
Whose soul's in so much pain  
Says love will flatten  
But it won't crack  
The coin won't crack*

*And when we make our bed out of war  
Deafen our children with its roar  
Repeat rewind replay once more  
Never unsee the sights they saw*

*In a life  
We get caught in the traffic  
In a life  
We make misery from magic  
In a life  
We miss the comic in the tragic  
In a life  
In a life*

*I feel alone I need it known  
I never achieved anything on my own  
I feel alone I need it known  
I only received from being shown  
I feel alone I need it known  
I never achieved anything on my own  
A skipping stone I was thrown  
The ocean floor is not my home*

*In a life  
We catch a glimpse of someone else  
In your eyes  
Caught a glance of myself*



# Scars

You got lost love and you found trouble  
When you went looking for your life  
You got some scars and some others suffer  
But you keep on reaching for the light  
The doors of your heart were kicked open  
But you're leaving history far behind  
Can't break what's already been broken  
And now it's time

I know, know, know  
All that you've been through  
So I know, know, know  
Who you are, who you are  
Let them show, show, show  
It's your scars that give you beauty  
You're a beauty  
Don't cover your scars

Your scars  
Don't cover your scars... they're your scars  
Don't cover your scars... they're your scars  
Don't cover your scars  
Your scars

You're looking up now  
You're looking skyward  
Your blackest night is turning blue  
All the tyrants that you've defeated  
The only one that's left is you  
The doors of your heart were kicked open  
But you're leaving history far behind  
Can't break what's already been broken  
But now it's time

I know, know, know  
All that you've been through  
I know, know, know  
Who you are, who you are  
Let 'em show, show, show  
It's your scars that give you beauty  
You're a beauty  
Don't cover your scars

Don't cover your scars... they're your scars  
Don't cover your scars... they're your scars  
Don't cover your scars... they're your scars

I'm the last of your loves  
The loser the least  
I'm the name on the form that demands  
your release  
I'm the silence when you grieve  
I'll keep you company  
Even if you don't believe that it's me

Put your hands on my hand  
Feel the nails of the state  
Punching holes in the innocent  
To fill them with hate

When the townhall cries  
For someone to blame  
Making laws out of lies  
And legal robes out of shame

Put your hand in my side  
Feel the contours of control  
The silver spikes of friendship  
Traded for a soul  
The touch and the taste of me  
Vinegar sweet  
You won't know who I am  
The next time we meet  
The next time we meet



THE ALTAR AT COCTEAU CHAPEL, VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER  
PHOTO BY VMIANE SASSEN, MARCH 2025

## RESURRECTION

# Song

*One time we had a lot of miles to go  
Road sign, the death and resurrection show  
You smile, the next thing you know, we died*

*Next life was waiting through an open door  
You said it's better than the one before  
Last night you promised the sun would rise*

*If love is in the air  
Let's take a breath  
If I sound ridiculous  
I'm not done yet  
All these signs to forever  
Have we got heaven for you  
Or you can go to hell together  
'Til death dies too*

*Are you holding on?  
Hold on  
Are you holding on?  
Resurrection song*

*All time number one inside my head  
Break rhyme, we could spend the day in bed  
Your line "we gotta get the hungry bread"*

*'Til death dies too and love's its epitaph*

*Do it for a dare  
Do it for a laugh  
Love is always somewhere  
At the back of the photograph  
Love extravagantly  
And without regret  
If there's anything better  
I've not heard it yet*

*Love is in the air  
So let's take a breath  
Fear to love, my friend,  
And remain in death*

*If love is in the air  
Let's take a breath  
If I sound ridiculous  
I'm not done yet  
All these signs to forever  
Have we got heaven for you  
Oh you can go to hell together  
Til death dies too*

*Are you holding on?  
Hold on  
Are you holding on?  
Resurrection song*

# EASTER *Parade*

*And I only have one song to bring  
For a siren lost at sea  
If she needs a song defying gravity  
I have one more left in me  
A song of devotion  
As cold as the ocean*

*On such a day, such a day as this  
On such a day, such a day  
Something in me died  
But I was no longer afraid  
Easter parade  
Easter parade*

*You speak to the part of me that cannot speak  
I can't see you but I know you're there  
I will always worship what I cannot keep  
And not every song will be a prayer*

*On such a day, such a day as this  
On such a day, such a day  
Something in me died  
But I was no longer afraid*

*Easter parade  
Parade  
Easter parade*

*Kyrie eleison  
Kyrie eleison  
Kyrie eleison  
Kyrie  
Kyrie eleison  
Kyrie eleison  
Kyrie  
Kyrie  
Kyrie*



THIS ARTWORK IS PROCESSION WITH LILIES BY THE RENOWNED IRISH ARTIST LOUIS LE BROCCOY, CREATED IN 1984-1985. THE PAINTING WAS INSPIRED BY A 1939 PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING SCHOOLCHILDREN HOLDING LILIES BLESSED AT THE FRANCISCAN CHURCH ON MERCHANT'S QUAY, DUBLIN. IT IS PART OF A SERIES CREATED BY THE ARTIST BETWEEN 1984 AND 1992 BASED ON THIS THEME.



MUSICIAN, PRODUCER AND VISUAL ARTIST BRIAN ENO FIRST BEGAN WORKING WITH U2 ON THEIR 1984 ALBUM THE UNFORGETTABLE FIRE. COEXIST (I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES?) IS HIS MOST RECENT COLLABORATION WITH THE BAND. BRIAN'S NEON TURNTABLE WAS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE STAGE DESIGN FOR U2:UV ACHTUNG BABY LIVE AT SPHERE IN LAS VEGAS.

'WATCHING THE GLOBAL CREEP OF FASCISM IS DISHEARTENING. I'D BEEN READING ABOUT ANOTHER ABHORRENT INCIDENCE OF IT - THIS TIME IN ISRAEL - WHEN BONO SENT ME THE COMPLETED VERSION OF THIS SONG. IT HAD A POWERFUL EFFECT ON ME. I WAS ANGRY AND UPSET BY THE NEWS I'D READ, BUT MOVED BY THIS SONG OF GRATITUDE WHICH REMINDED ME THAT FOCUSING ON WHAT IS GOING RIGHT IS AS ESSENTIAL AS ITS OPPOSITE. THE TWO WAYS OF CHANGING THE WORLD ARE (LOOSELY SPEAKING): STOP SOMETHING BAD OR START SOMETHING GOOD. THE SONG REMINDED ME THAT THEY GO HAND IN HAND. AND ALTHOUGH I DON'T ADDRESS MY THANKS TO 'THE LORD', I FELT LIKE I WAS SAYING THANK YOU FOR THIS LIFE, THANK YOU FOR EXISTENCE.' **BRIAN ENO**

## COEXIST (I WILL *Bless* THE LORD AT ALL TIMES?)

"Am I the best or the worst or the worst of the best?" she sang  
Ice cream smile wide as a mile back then  
"Say a nice prayer, be a good girl, finger on my lips"  
When she returned her lipstick had learned how not to kiss  
I can't fix her, can only love her  
Can't keep her pocket full  
I can't keep her face in smiles  
Someone's stolen what was beautiful  
I can't sing her home to me in rhymes  
But I will bless the Lord at all times

Bless the Lord at all times  
I will bless the Lord at all times  
I will bless  
I will bless the Lord at all times  
I will bless the Lord  
I will bless the Lord at all times

Every night we hope and pray for a new day to rise  
Every morning when the sun shows up it's still a surprise  
Any child is every child in any mother's eyes  
I will bless the Lord  
I will bless the Lord at all times  
I will bless the Lord at all times  
I will bless the Lord  
I will bless the Lord at all times

That child you hear has been crying for years in the wilderness  
A child without armour had no hatred to harbour, only loveliness  
The driver of the ambulance unpacks his shirt pressed and neat  
To honour the hurt and the hungry he will later greet  
There's not so much road left here and no road signs  
Drones hover without any consciousness over war crimes  
I will bless the Lord at all times?

The tide is rising, all ships are sinking  
New poets must despise all old ways of thinking  
Whoever made language must've been drinking  
Twenty-six characters own all the ink and printing  
I got so many words in my head but I can't find the lines  
I will bless the Lord at all times

Changes, these changes  
Will rain on this parade  
Changes, these changes  
I am not afraid

No one there to write it down  
But when the prophet came around  
Said "I've a stranger with me  
In the fight none can compare  
But food and shelter we share  
Beloved community"

Every night we hope and pray for a new day to rise  
Every morning when the sun shows up, it's still a surprise  
Any child is every child in any mother's eyes  
I will bless the Lord  
I will bless the Lord at all times  
I will bless the Lord at all times  
I will bless the Lord  
I will bless the Lord at all times

Changes, these changes  
Will rain on this parade  
Changes, these changes  
I am not afraid  
The pages that enrage us  
She tears them from the book

"Save us, save us" sings the girl of Guadalupe



## IT'S UNIVERSAL

**COLE MORETON TALKED WITH PIOTR MŁODOŻENIEC, THE POLISH DESIGNER WHO CAME UP WITH THE COEXIST LOGO. 'I LIKE LETTERS, SO I STARTED TO PLAY WITH THEM.'**

**THE FIRST TIME MANY OF US SAW** the image was back in 2005. Bono was singing *Love And Peace or Else* as the band segued into *Sunday Bloody Sunday* on the *Vertigo Tour*, when he gestured for the band to quieten down and pointed to his forehead. There, on a white bandana, was a striking new logo he had come across as 'some graffiti sprayed on a wall, not too far from here. It says "coexist".'

The first letter was an Islamic crescent moon, the last a cross familiar to all Christians. The X in the middle had been replaced by a Jewish star of David. The call was for all of us to live together in respect and harmony, whatever our faith or creed.

'Jesus, Jew, Mohammed, it's all true. All sons of Abraham,' chanted Bono, before picking up the melody again and crying out to the ancient figure known as the source of all three religions. 'Father Abraham, where are you now? Father Abraham look what you've done. You've pitted your son against your son. No more. No more. Wipe your tears away.'

Then Edge came in with the chorus and we were back to a song written in the midst of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, now a cry for peace in all kinds of conflict.

More than 20 years later, the black-and-white logo that many people first came across in those shows has become popular across the world, a symbol of resistance to tyranny and oppression and a banner for unity, equality and, well, coexistence. The origins have been lost in the mists of time, so where did it really come from? And who created it?

The answer is Piotr Młodożeniec, an artist born in Warsaw in 1956. His father Jan was a ground-breaking poster designer whose work opposed martial law. Piotr's first works, in the early Eighties, were often made in support of the Solidarity movement. Piotr uses bold colours, strong and playful typography to create art that has an instant impact but is also intriguing. At the turn of the

century, he had entered a competition run by the contemporary art centre Museum on the Seam, which sits on the border between East and West Jerusalem.

'It was a nice challenge: "What does coexistence mean?"' says Piotr. 'I like letters, so I started to play with them. I noticed that the first letter is C and it reminds me of a crescent moon. The last letter is T, which reminds me of a cross. So I had the beginning of the idea, then I thought: "What will be in the middle?" I put in the Jewish star and suddenly I saw that this was a good logo.'

His entry did not win. 'It was some graphic designer from Japan who won this contest. But all the entries were enlarged and shown in the city of Jerusalem. Then the exhibition become an international thing, travelling to Europe, the US and Canada, South America and even Australia. As it did, my logo started to be popular.'

Some people in the US liked it so much they claimed the copyright and created merchandise, all without permission from Piotr. 'They didn't ask me if they can do it. They didn't even care about who made it.' Other versions were created with each of the letters standing for a religion or creed, although Piotr says they lack the impact of the original. 'That is too much.'

U2 cut through the confusion to identify the original artist and credited him on the DVD of the *Vertigo* show. Piotr said on film in 2016: 'When I heard that the leader of U2, Mr Bono, was using this sign, I was pleased.' The logo had been created at a relatively peaceful time. 'I did not know the world was going to go the way it has.'

Now Piotr tells Propaganda that he is not surprised so many people feel his logo speaks for them. 'It's universal. It's very close to my way of thinking, that all religions are equal. If you are Hindu or Buddhist or anything, when you praise God it's okay,' he says. 'I invented this symbol and I saw immediately that it is very powerful. It is a very good feeling when you are satisfied that you have done something good.' ■

# 'A Spiritual Quest'

**ADAM TALKS ABOUT THE JOURNEY OF RECOVERY, THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF THE TWELVE STEPS AND TRAVELLING WITH BONO, THE EDGE AND LARRY TO THE SONGS ON THE EASTER LILY EP.**

**A SPIRITUAL QUEST and a spiritual position have always been at the heart of U2, and the songs on Easter Lily are very much coming from that place. It's a return to some of those themes that were on earlier records, with our approach from a position of respect for the great traditions. We've always been advocates for peace, but peace doesn't mean brushing differences under the carpet. It means you meet each other and you're prepared to compromise.**

As for my own spiritual journey, I know that I was perceived by some people outside the band to be separate from the others in the early days. In fact, we were a group of guys who were all the same age, from similar backgrounds; in some ways, even our family environments were quite similar, in their dysfunctionality. Having been raised in church-going families, we adhered to the traditional ideas of church and religiosity, but had questions and came to a spiritual place of our own in separate ways through seeking affirmation in different places. For Bono in particular, it was the Shalom church group. He invited Larry and Edge to attend. I met some of the people involved, and I didn't experience the freedom that Bono, Edge and Larry felt. For me, it felt restrictive. My particular journey at the time was outward-looking. I thought: 'Let me at the world. I don't like coming from the suburbs, there's more going on out there. I want to take that ride.'

So, I stayed within and explored my own existential spiritual ghetto, whilst taking comfort in the fact that the three guys I was in a band with were essentially good, spiritual people. They weren't going to do anything nasty to me. The only thing they might do is decide to give up on the 'rock 'n' roll life' in favour of the spiritual life, which was challenging!

However, I did come from my own spiritual position. I'd experienced a kind of relationship with God as a teenager, taking my religious studies very seriously at

ages 13 and 14. I had then accepted the various tenets of a Christian life, including how you treat people, how you examine your conscience and how you try to be the best person you can be. So even though I was cast as a bit of a rebel in the band, I wasn't exactly reading the occult! I was simply unschooled and undisciplined, while trying to marry my beliefs with the opportunities and challenges of being in a band, as well as forming a creative partnership. How did one make that work? That was running around in my head. It was there that I spent much of what is now considered our early period. Meanwhile, I was also exploring recreational drugs. I was drinking and enjoying that. I was certainly meeting girls, so I was in a somewhat permissive frame of mind.

Now, fast forward 20-odd years from that time into the 1990s and we have a different situation. The lives of the other guys have changed, their views have relaxed, they are staying out late and drinking in a way I could never have imagined back in the day, but my life was beginning to spiral downwards into alcoholism and possibly some drug addiction, though I consider alcoholism as my main disease. I was lost. I didn't have that spiritual conviction I spoke of anymore. Addiction robs you of a lot of those things. I was still capable of praying and asking for help. At my lowest, I would seek help in prayer and make various promises, but salvation came to me through reaching the point of realising: 'I have to go into rehab.'

The first week of rehab in 1998, I fought and kicked against the process. I didn't feel I was in the right place at all. Then, after a week, I began to consent and to grudgingly realise: 'I have to listen to what people say. I have to gravitate towards the fellowship that is on offer. I have to accept that my way of doing things has failed me and is not really working.' This allowed me to eventually bring God back into my life, either as God or as a Higher Power. I received benefits from that. I very much enjoyed the support in my early sobriety, which was the hardest time.



COCTEAU CHAPEL,  
VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER, MARCH 2025.  
PHOTO BY VMJANE SASSEN.



As I traversed my journey of recovery, I have found it valuable not to take responsibility for everything, and to hand over decisions and outcomes to a higher power. Also, to embrace that part of recovery which is the willingness to not focus on self. Instead, to focus on others and what you can do to help them. I think that's a very useful tool for life, whether it be through Christianity or Alcoholics Anonymous. It's a good way to get through life, by stepping away from ego.

The writer and priest Richard Rohr calls the Twelve Steps a sacramental tool for humility. When we met with Richard the first time, he had worked with a lot of alcoholics in recovery through his prison work, so he'd quite happily absorbed that language into his own view of life and his particular beliefs. For me, that was reassuring and comforting, that these things weren't separate. I saw the Twelve Steps as involving a relationship with God, and I saw evidence of people having a relationship with God through the Twelve Steps. I saw the power of what they could do in that space.

I realised early on that addiction is primarily a mental issue. Whilst there's no ultimate cure, there are good mental and physical practices that safeguard you against giving into whatever your addiction is. Attitudes have changed significantly over the last 30 years. If a mental health issue is caught quickly enough, rather than having to wait years for some kind of psychiatric treatment, there are ways of helping people that mean they can recover more quickly and reduce the risk of reoccurrences. So that's what I've been trying to do in Ireland, working with charities and recently working with an organisation called A Lust For Life, which educates students in school about what feeling bad about themselves or having mental issues actually is.

What does my spiritual life look like now? When I get up, there is a period of meditation. I am not a fully-fledged meditation master in any sense, but I do think about the day. I have a couple of books of meditation that give me a thought for the day. Within the AA programme there are

a number of prayers that are relevant to which I refer on a daily basis. Additionally, I try to connect with people that have addiction issues, which helps me stay grounded, because one of the things about us addicts is we can forget how bad it was. We can minimise what it was and say: "Oh, it wasn't so bad."

It is good to talk to somebody with a similar condition, to remind oneself that it was indeed bad. The disease tries to limit your understanding of how much harm it brings you, just to fool you. I still make it to AA meetings, not as often as I used to because my needs have changed, but I like to go. You become part of a community and a fellowship and that feels like people speaking my own language. You can exchange experiences and information that may be helpful to someone else, or you may hear something that's helpful to you. There is a spiritual dimension to this life. It's foolish not to have it working for you rather than against you.

I am open to meeting any wise person that's available for consultation. As we travel around on tour, we meet a lot of people. What I hear time and time again is about 'bringing it back to simplicity'.

What I have been through has now given me the language and ability to be closer to Bono, Edge and Larry, as we walk side by side. I may not have formed or developed my spiritual views from a Shalom-type, evangelical (Protestant and Catholic) background as they did - my conversion, for all intents and purposes, came later and in a different way - but we certainly understand each other's language now. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON A LUST FOR LIFE CHARITY, VISIT: [ALUSTFORLIFE.COM](http://ALUSTFORLIFE.COM)

# 'Faith and Hope'

**A DOZEN SPECTACULAR NEW SONGS, SEEMINGLY OUT OF NOWHERE... FIRST DAYS OF ASH, THEN EASTER LILY BURSTING INTO THE LIGHT ON GOOD FRIDAY. HOW HAS THIS EXTRAORDINARY FLOWERING OF CREATIVITY HAPPENED? AND WHAT'S IT BEEN LIKE TO BE IN THE ROOM? JACKNIFE LEE, THE IRISH PRODUCER WHO HAS BEEN COLLABORATING WITH THE BAND SINCE HOW TO DISMANTLE AN ATOMIC BOMB BACK IN 2003, SPILLS THE SECRETS OF THESE SESSIONS TO COLE MORETON FOR PROPAGANDA.**

**'WE WERE WORKING ON A NEW ALBUM, making good progress. We were in a good place and had the beginning and the middle of a great album all agreed. But when something is going well, it freaks them out a bit. They try to find ways to create more energy through chaos. So Bono said: "Let's make a record and put it out in two weeks."'**

That was Days of Ash, an EP lamenting and raging over conflicts around the world, including Iran, Israel and Palestine, Ukraine and on the streets of America. 'U2 have responded to cultural and political events before, and there were a lot of things happening at that moment that required a response,' says Jackknife. 'We put together the EP very quickly – that was exhausting and disruptive to the album process. It was exciting, we went hard at it, then we said: "Let's go back to the album.'"

But that was not the end of the adventure. 'Then we realised: "The album is not the work, for now. The work is about reacting to events in real time. Rock 'n' roll doesn't do that often anymore.'"

'So about two weeks ahead of Easter, the band said: "If we're doing a record about the external world at the beginning of Lent, when you do fasting and contemplation and all those things, let's put an Easter EP out on Good Friday that is more about the internal response to things." We were discussing faith and hope, so we leaned into that.'

These are bold decisions to make for a band facing a lot of expectations. 'You make your community and you do that by being honest and being open. This record is saying what it's feeling. It's not really concerned with the marketplace. It's an expression of what's happening with these guys at this moment and it's kind of refreshing.'

Having chosen to put themselves under creative pressure, U2 looked at what they had with new eyes. 'We got a new song, finished some other ones but completely rewrote all the lyrics, and went at it as hard as we could again,' says Jackknife, a hugely experienced, award-winning

producer who has also worked with artists including REM and Taylor Swift. 'I've been averaging two hours sleep a night. I feel like I'm living on the International Space Station, I've lost all sense of time. It's been really intense, but also very exciting. There is a lot of jeopardy, and there's nervous excitement, which is a great source of creative fuel.'

Where has this been happening? 'In a small house in Dublin, into which we have put a studio. It's very ramshackle, there are sofas everywhere, we just sit around, then play. It's kind of chilled and really conducive to openness. The house is getting knocked down anyway, I think it's been condemned, so we can do things like knock out a floor to give a higher ceiling where the drum kit is. Luckily, we don't have any neighbours.' That is lucky. Who is there? 'For the most part, we've got a tight room: no one in the studio other than the four of them and me.

Duncan and Rab on the team, come in every so often.'

Bono and Edge have brought the songs, mostly. 'But then we go through a process of destruction, testing each song in different situations, with different rhythms or textures or lyrics, so many permutations.'

Not everyone is present all the time. 'Some days I've been working with Bono or Edge or both. Some days are Larry days. Larry has had to learn a new style of drumming because of previous injuries, but it's really opened up so many new possibilities for him. He's been really enjoying working on his parts at the studio, he'll come in and completely alter the way a song is going. That has happened on almost every track.'

Then there is the bass player. 'Some days are Adam days. Adam has a clarity that is quite spectacular. He's also a complete oddball. He'll suggest things that are just crazy and you think: "That's not gonna work, it's ridiculous." Then it works so well. The way he plays is completely unorthodox – he will throw a spanner in the works, musically, but it will turn out beautiful.'

The lyrics on Easter Lily have come mostly from the singer, but not entirely. 'Very few people on the planet have the life force of Bono. It's the human equivalent of a hurricane, his energy changes the molecules in the room.

*'They're rediscovering their power as a group of people. That is a joy to witness... I think this is an important era for the band.'*

THE CURLEWS, MARCH 2026.  
PHOTO BY LARRY MULLEN JNR.



When he's moving through, you just have to go with him. But when it's over people go: "Yeah, that was great, but maybe we could think about doing this differently..." That's a softer moment in the room. Everybody gets involved. So it's a proper collective.

'I think because they've been around each other a long time, there's a wonderful respect they have for each other, and an openness that is very healthy.'

They have been working at great speed, but going for precision. 'We're trying not to do any overdubs, which means a lot of work getting every single part right, making sure each is distinctive and unique. Usually you can hide not-so-great ideas by putting on layers, but we are trying to make everything clear and work with very little excess. That aspect of this is like the Ramones or Television. The philosophy is: "How can we get this idea over with as little

information as possible?" Every part has to count, there is no hiding.'

When all this is done, they come together as a powerful unit. 'You feel the energy when that happens,' says Jackknife. 'The four of them playing in a room was less important for the last few records, there were other things to learn, but they have a new focus on that now. They have realised there is dark matter that connects them when they play together, the weird thing that only they can do. They haven't done it in a while. They're rediscovering their power as a group of people. That is a joy to witness.'

Jackknife Lee sounds delighted. 'I think this is an important era for the band. They have not sounded so energised in decades.' ■



*'Some band photos from my collection – not sure I'll be getting a prize for my photojournalistic skills, but in fairness the subject matter was difficult to shoot in its natural environment!' – Larry, The Curlews, March 2026*

## 'A Peace that Exists Naturally...'

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, NIGERIAN SINGER-SONGWRITER **ADEOLA** RECEIVED A POEM FROM HER MANAGER - IF IT RESONATED, COULD SHE RECORD IT ON HER PHONE AND SEND IT BACK? AS THE PROJECT WAS SHROUDED IN SECRECY, ADEOLA HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD WIND UP ON A SURPRISE U2 EP THAT WOULD DROP TWO WEEKS LATER ON ASH WEDNESDAY. THE POEM WAS 'WILDPEACE', WRITTEN BY THE ISRAELI POET YEHUDA AMICHAH IN 1971. CATHLEEN FALSANI SPOKE TO ADEOLA IN PARIS TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.

'I read it and was like, you know what? Yes. Because it was about such an interesting concept of peace,' Adeola says, speaking from her home in Paris on Palm Sunday. 'It was about a peace that was wild, not forced or created by treaties and whatnot - a peace that just exists naturally, as it should.'

So, she read Wildpeace into her phone a few times, sent the recordings back to her manager, and mostly forgot about it. In fact, it wasn't until two days after Days of Ash was released, while she was searching Spotify to prepare for the release of her own new song Hold You, that she discovered her name listed under the new U2 EP.

'I was in bed at midnight when I saw it, and I called my brother [who lives in Galway] and said, "Would you go to Spotify and check this for me?" He did and then started to jump and scream into the phone,' Adeola recalls, laughing. 'The collaboration worked out in the most blessed, the most random, the most beautiful way.'

She quickly connected the dots between herself and U2 when she saw who had produced and scored the track: Jacknife Lee. Adeola is a member of Les Amazones d'Afrique, the pan-African musical collective and feminist supergroup, with whom Lee is a frequent collaborator. Adeola's manager is Valérie Malot, who founded the supergroup that is dedicated to promoting gender equality and eradicating violence against women.

Another Les Amazones member, Angélique Kidjo, also has noteworthy connections to U2, having covered Mysterious Ways for the 2008 charity album In the Name of Love: Africa Celebrates U2. In 2010, Bono joined Kidjo on a version of Move On Up for her album *ÖYÖ*.

Adeola says she is an ardent fan of U2 for their music, of course, but equally for who they are as people and as a community of friends. 'How they do music and activism, how they don't hide their faith... it's a continuity and consistency of making these songs that are just so profound and meaningful,' she says.

'Days of Ash is an anti-war project. It's so current, it's so necessary. I'm just blessed to even have my voice be part of something so incredibly powerful.'

While her contribution came as a complete surprise, for Adeola it also feels somewhat providential. 'I could not have planned this myself if I tried,' she says. 'In terms of timing, it's a surrender to the unique and divine plan of God... this kind of activism is what I want to be part of.'

When she's not making solo music or with Les Amazones, Adeola, who moved from Nigeria to France in 2017 for graduate work in business before pursuing her musical dreams, can often be found leading art tours of the Louvre and history tours of Normandy, where she takes visitors to Omaha Beach and other World War II battle sites.

'There you can see the actual cost of war, you can know the names of the people who have died fighting someone else's wars... you can know their stories,' she says. 'Peace comes at the cost of death, the cost of life, the cost of people, the cost of things.'

'After we've done the most damage, then we decide we want peace,' she says. 'But we could actually choose to grow peace wherever we are. We can allow peace to exist naturally. Wild peace - that is also an option'. ■



# Positive Feedback

ECOLOGIST TOM CROWTHER, AN EXPERT IN GLOBAL ECOSYSTEMS AND AN ADVISER TO THE UN DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION, WORKS WITH THE EDGE ON REVITALISING SOIL BIODIVERSITY. HIS BOOK NATURE'S ECHO OFFERS A HOPEFUL VISION. 'IN THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD WE HAVE SO MUCH TO LEARN FROM THE WORLD OF SPIRITUALITY.' BRIAN DRAPER CALLED HIM TO FIND OUT MORE.

## How did you team up with The Edge?

Edge and I have been working together for a few years now. He founded an organisation called Oath, and I'm a soil ecologist, and the mission is to revitalise global soil biodiversity!

## People might have heard of you from your 'trillion trees' research, which went viral but was misunderstood...

Yes, our research showed where forests could recover on degraded land if we removed the barriers. It was never a prescription to plant a trillion trees, but that nuance got lost – and what followed was a wave of organisations buying up land, displacing local communities, and blanketing landscapes with monoculture carbon farms. Which is exactly the kind of destructive practice we'd spent our careers arguing against. The irony is that most of the scientific criticism that came our way was criticism we agreed with.

## Your new book offers an unusually hopeful environmental vision. Where does that optimism come from?

I was in the environmental movement for a long time, where dedicated people were involved in a frantic rush to save the planet. The trouble is, despite the best intentions, the more we panic, the more the fear builds from this movement. Other people were saying we need to heal ourselves first and find connection between humans and nature. This sounds 'woo-woo' to a scientist, but they're right – we need to build the personal resilience and regeneration that is fundamental to tackling the panic we're facing. My book aims to provide the scientific basis for environmental optimism – to help us turn from panic to opportunity.

## What is that scientific basis?

I focus on the most fundamental scientific principle there is: 'feedback loops'.

## U2 were once called Feedback!

I didn't know that – amazing! Anything that changes is driven by a positive feedback loop. Starting with

the Big Bang and the creation of stars, where matter pulls in more matter. Humans have kicked off lots of loops that are driving degradation – the more carbon we emit, the warmer the planet gets, for instance, and the more carbon comes out of the soil. However, the awesome thing is that loops can also build out of regeneration. Farmers using regenerative approaches bring back biodiversity that improve their yields. Those loops have exactly the same potential to drive staggering momentum if we can lean into them and nourish them with attention and enthusiasm.

## So attention and enthusiasm are part of the science?

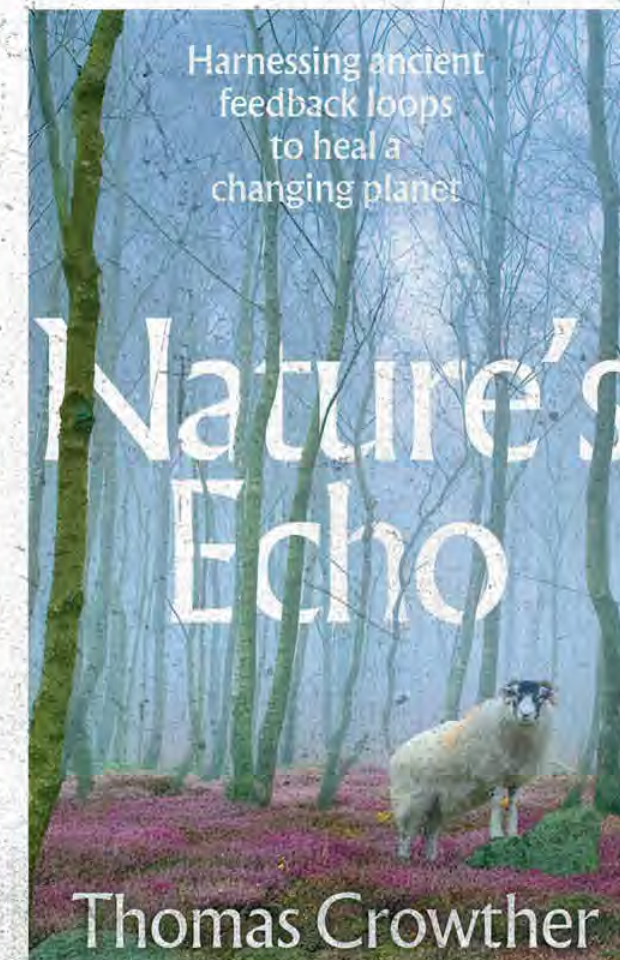
Yes! If we allow our attention to settle on how devastating things are, that will drive a feedback loop that leads to inaction. But if we allow our attention to settle on the opportunities where regenerative practices can improve our lives, that's the key. From feeling healthier by cutting meat from your diet, to saving money from going electric – if you can find joy, that's the fuel for feedback loops that build with incredible momentum. If you're loving doing it, you'll tend to do it more, which makes it easier to love it.

## Where might spiritual practice come into this?

This is at the heart of the challenge. The separation of matter and spirit is at the core of our separation between people and nature. Every spiritual practice I'm aware of has independently come, over thousands of years, towards practices that allow this reconnection. Whether it's prayer, meditation, mindful walking or silent contemplation, spiritual practice helps us into the present moment and to 'be' there in awareness underneath all those loops.

## Do you have a spiritual practice?

I meditate. They say you should meditate an hour a day, unless you're too busy, when you should do two. In the scientific world, we have so much to learn from the world of spirituality, and I'd love to see them coming together. Feedback loops present a unique framework to do so.



## You share a beautiful example of regeneration from Costa Rica, which has a musicality to it.

Yes! The biggest driver of environmental degradation on the planet is poverty. Costa Rica applied a tiny tax on fossil-fuel consumption, and distributed that money to rural farmers and landowners, so people were not so dependent on cutting down rainforest.

Costa Rica was down to 25% tree cover – it now has almost 60%. We recorded the soundscapes of Costa Rican rainforests. You can hear the beautiful high and low frequency noises of an intact natural rainforest. Birds, bees, insects, howler monkeys! It sounds, I would argue, objectively beautiful. It's by far the most motivating environmental data I've ever seen in my life.

Amazingly, we correlated those sounds with the 100,000 most frequently downloaded songs, and found they sound statistically closer to the regenerated forest than they do to a degraded one. Our top musicians have tapped into our deep evolutionary preferences – soundscapes that exist within the right frequency range that reflect healthy, thriving ecosystems.

## Looking ahead 20 years, what gives you hope?

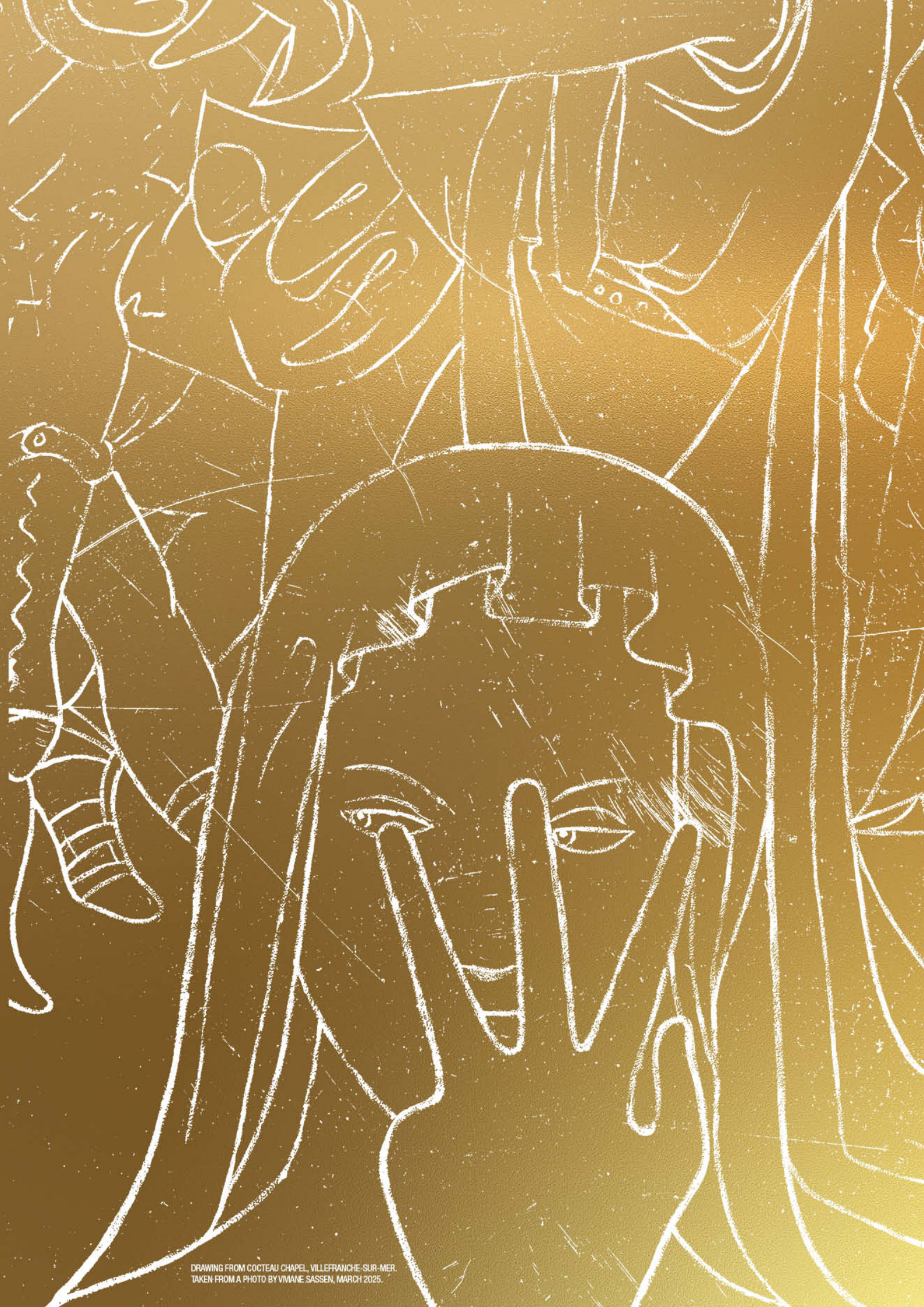
I believe the feedback loops of regeneration have begun and you can't stop them. Regenerative agriculture is taking over this world. We're going to have biodiversity improving billions of livelihoods around the world. So all I pray for is that our human feedback loops are nourishing those and that we've got a society that can be optimistic and bright and enthusiastic about our environmental future rather than one that's in a state of panic. And what I would dream of is that environmentalism isn't just for environmentalists. This is for every human on our planet. ■

'NATURE'S ECHO: HARNESSING ANCIENT FEEDBACK LOOPS TO HEAL A CHANGING PLANET' BY THOMAS CROWTHER IS PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN IN JUNE 2026.

FIND OUT MORE AT: [OATHBIOME.COM](http://OATHBIOME.COM)



COCTEAU CHAPEL, VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER, MARCH 2025.  
PHOTO BY VMANE SASSEN.



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