

U2 – October (1981)

Written by bluesever

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A1 Gloria A2 I Fall Down A3 I Threw A Brick Through A Window A4 Rejoice A5 Fire B1 Tomorrow B2 October B3 With A Shout (Jerusalem) B4 Stranger In A Strange Land B5 Scarlet B6 Is That All? Bagpipes [Oilleann Pipes], Bodhrán – Vincent Kilduff
Bass – Adam Clayton Drums – Larry Guitar, Piano – The Edge Vocals – Bono

October proves that even the mighty U2 were subject, long ago, to the difficult second album syndrome. During its recording both Bono and The Edge left the band temporarily, the album's original lyrics were pilfered before recording could commence, and this while the band were still on a very limited budget. As such it stands as a testament to the four-piece's tenacity, if not to their ability to judge their audience's tastes.

October concerns itself in the main with things spiritual. All band members except Adam Clayton were avowed Christians and at this point the singer and guitarist still held doubts as to whether one could rock and get up close and personal with Jesus (hence the temporary exit). In the end they decided it was possible and as a result the album isn't shy with its references to rejoicing and exultation. The album's only hit, Gloria, even came complete with a Latin liturgical chorus. It was all fuel to the fire of detractors who objected to such bare-faced sanctimoniousness. Luckily material such as I Threw A Brick Through A Window and the title track, bolstered by Steve Lilywhite's production, was still in a class of its own.

The aforementioned lost lyrics caused tension as the studio meter was ticking while they had to be improvised/remembered, but this also led to some intriguing subconscious trickle-through. It was only later, he admitted, that Bono realised that Tomorrow was about the death of his mother.

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Sonically the band was in a holding pattern. The widescreen textures that were to lift the next opus, *War*, were learned by a resolute approach to touring where, despite, the poorer sales of this album, the band kept the flame of their burgeoning fan base alive. *October* remains their least favourite offering, but still stands as a fine document of a band finding its legs. ---Dennis O'Dell, BBC Review

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