



# The lineup

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

The children of the middle class give up the comforts of home to spend a chilly night outside sleeping on the sidewalk.

For what? A chance to spend half-a-week's salary for three hours of music at a cramped stadium.

You figure it out. Even the most devoted Beethoven fan wouldn't have camped out overnight for tickets to the Austrian pianist's gigs.

But recently, more than 100 people brought everything from sleeping bags to Southern Comfort to keep warm as they waited for U2 tickets to go on sale in front of the Record Outlet in Westland.

The hoped-for reward of the all-night vigil was good seats for the Irish band's April 30 show at the Pontiac Silverdome. Or, for that matter, any seats at all.

"If you don't do it, you don't get the tickets," said Amanda Jayne, 19, of Dearborn Heights, who was near the front of the line.

Tickets aside, you could look at the campout as a consciousness-raising experience. Perhaps you could appreciate, if only a little bit, what the homeless go through sleeping outside every night.

Except street people don't have their wives answering an SOS at 1 a.m. for more blankets and a pillow. And thanks to his wife, this note-taking ticket seeker was able to get through the night.

But having had experience at this before, you'd think I'd know better.

**EXPERIENCE** No. 1 was U2's last visit to Detroit. Then a college student, I was at the bar with a buddy when it was announced over the radio at midnight that tickets were going on sale in the morning.

We put down our beers and rushed to Joe Louis Arena, dressed for an arctic expedition in two pairs of long johns and two coats and carrying a Thermos of coffee. We sat for an hour, numb from the 5-below temperatures.

Hypothermia had all but set in when the question of how much money we had brought was raised. Together we possessed \$3.26 (\$1.20 of which was in beer bottles).

Cary Cato, 19, of Garden City was in the same line on the frigid January night — for 19 hours. Cato also went home empty-handed.

"All they had left was upper bowl (arena)," said Cato, who was at the front of the line at the Record Outlet. "I told the guy, 'Forget it. I'll get tickets from a scalper.'"

Cato made sure that didn't happen again. His spot was staked out since 8 p.m. Cato was joined by friends Vince Zimmerman and Lisa Dallas, both from Garden City. All three were bundled up, sitting in lawn chairs.

A group, wrapped in blankets, was huddled next to them.

**BOTH** groups, like most of those in line, shared one thing in common — their love of U2.

They passed the night talking about previous U2 shows and listening to the Irish band's music.

There were those who waited in line, it seems, just for the fun of it. One group in particular was intent on trying to pickle themselves, drinking their own moonshine. One

person succeeded, throwing up and then passing out. Other group members play cards and yelled to others in line to turn up their music.

"Anyone got any Bon Jovi?" one yelled to no one in particular.

"No!" responded a chorus of people.

As new people arrived, a security guard popped out of a red Chevette and took down their names and their place in line.

It got quieter as more people started falling asleep. Even the group of revelers finally nodded off.

Everyone woke up as soon as the sunlight hit the sidewalk. People started putting their lawn chairs, sleeping bags and jam boxes away in their cars.

At 8 a.m., the groggy-eyed people started taking their formal positions in line. Some people from the middle of the line went to the front to see if anyone had taken cuts.

**FOR SOME**, it was the first time standing in line all night for tickets.

"I first came here around midnight," said Tom Gardner, 20, of Livonia. "I asked a friend if he wanted to take a shift. I went home and got a sleeping bag and a lawn chair."

Jim Botter of Livonia, on the other hand, knew what to expect. He estimated having waited overnight for tickets at least "eight to 10 times."

"I slept six hours," said Botter, perhaps holding the line's unofficial record for shut-eye. "I can sleep anywhere."

At 10 a.m., people started getting restless. The record store employees handed white bags to one of the people up front.

The crowd was told no tickets would be sold until the trash around the building is picked up.

"Get your official U2 trash bag here," the guy yelled, passing them out along the line.

Then, finally, the tickets started selling. The first group of people came up with their tickets.

"What'd you get? What's left?" everyone asked.

With tickets in hand, they left in their cars in a hurry. All except one yuck, who didn't look familiar from the night before.

He walked down the sidewalk, holding his ducats up like a trophy and offered to sell them to those in line for \$35 each.

The crowd moaned.

## U2 breaks through

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There are those who recall with fondness the first Beatles shows in Hamburg, West Germany.

Others can remember the launching gigs for the Rolling Stones at the Marquee Club in London.

Cornac Wright of Southfield can relate.

Wright, who moved to the United States from Dublin, Ireland, four years ago, caught some of the first U2 shows in 1979 right after the band had formed.

"They were unbelievably awful," said Wright, who caught the new hot Irish group in a place called The Dandelion Green in Dublin.

"They used to do covers of Peter Frampton's 'Show Me the Way.'"

After that I refused to see them for a year.

But all is forgiven. **WRIGHT WILL** be among more than 40,000 people to see the band on its current American Tour Thursday, April 30, at the Pontiac Silverdome.

U2 (which consists of Paul "Bono" Hewson, Dave "The Edge" Evans, Adam Clayton and Larry Mullen Jr.) has come a long way from the parking lots of Dublin where they played as gawky teenagers, charging 50-pence admission.

Rolling Stone magazine heralded the Irish foursome as "The Band of the '80s."

**WRIGHT HAS** become a supporter. He's seen the group in sold-out performances at the Grand Circus Theater in Detroit and the Conspiracy of Hope concert for Amnesty International in Chicago.

But he can't help but reminisce with laughter, witnessing how the band started out. Though the group couldn't play covers worth a lick, he and his friends noticed the energy U2 had.

"We said they would be great if they would get rid of the singer (Bono)," said Wright, looking back at the irony of it all. "He would run up and down the stage and preach about how easy it was and this and that."

"With the crowds being somewhat more cynical than they are here, it didn't go over too well at first."

Marsha Dodero, who works at Harmony House in Birmingham, remembers the band on its first American tour when it played at Harpo's in Detroit. By then, after they had recorded their first album "Boy," the kinks had been worked out.

"**BACK THEN**, you could tell they knew they had something special," Dodero said.

Dodero, in fact, has made it to every U2 appearance in Detroit in the last six years. Her favorite was one of their first gigs at Dooley's in East Lansing.

"The place wasn't even packed," she said. "You could go right up front by the stage. It was like a personal concert."

What impresses Tom Kassel, 25, of Westland about the group's concerts is the audience.

"I noticed the diversity of the people," said Kassel, who was in attendance at U2's last show in the Detroit area in 1985 at Joe Louis Arena. "I mean there were your heavy metal rockers and then there were your Richie Cunningham Christian types. Everybody was just enjoying the music."

"At some concerts, people are just there to get drunk or get high," said Cary Cato of Garden City. "That's fine if that's what you're into. At U2 concerts, the crowds are different. Everybody is into the music."



U2, along with Lone Justice, will be appearing Thursday, April 30, at the Pontiac Silverdome.