

# Homer, *the slut*



**Issue Eleven** - *the finishing end*

## Contents

Coming Straight From The Heart	Andrew Muir	1-3
Focus On: <i>Chimes Of Freedom</i>	Paula K.V. Radice	1-18
Hegemony and Bob Dylan	Carol Bedford	1-13
Songs From Another World	Bob Forryan	1-6
Bits & Bobs (Including cuttings)	Andrew Muir/Pia Parviainen	1-51
A Review Of The Reviews	Mark Carter	1-2
Paul Williams Interview - Part Two	Andrew Muir	1-4
A Note On: Blind Willie McTell On Record	Michael Gray	1-10
From Behind A Burning Bush	J.R. Stokes	1-8
Ads		Throughout

J.R. Stokes and Mark Carter write for **Freewheelin'** and Bob Forryan writes for **Judas**. These are privately circulated Dylan fanzines.

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**Long term contributors thanks to:** JRS who came on board early and has illuminated and entertained ever since, Mark Carter for mountains of work and contributions, Bob Forryan - who never considered himself a regular contributor but who wrote in every issue after his first. (As far as I am aware Bob Forryan had never written before and I consider the publication of his work justification alone for all the time and effort I've put into this 'zine.) And last, but obviously not least, to Michael Gray for 'phoning up one day and asking if he could contribute to the magazine - bringing out the fastest response from my good self in many a long year. And, indeed, thanks to everyone who has contributed at any time.

### THE WARMLINE FROM JUNE 1st 1994

As many of you are aware, I had no intention of keeping the warmline going after closing down **Homer**; indeed the lack of any peace because of the damn thing was one of the main reasons for finding a less stressful way to pursue my Dylan activities. However I have been persuaded by a number of people - (strangely they are the people who I would have thought would least need a warmline as their information sources are so good) - that it is providing an invaluable service.

However, I need to install another telephone line in the flat to deal with this and, finding the idea of an 0891 number too distasteful, I have taken the advice of regular callers and decided to go for a subscription service. Here's the deal - you pay £5 per year for the service which is c.0.136p per day. Hopefully if enough people subscribe this figure can come down as it is only intended to cover rental costs. In addition, though, I need to cover installation costs and offset at least some of the cost of a new, more functional, answer-phone. (The warmline service itself will become more professional in approach, *sans* Celtic and other football jokes, with longer messages, much more information and clearer sound). Therefore, I am asking for an initial subscription of £10: if I get thirty of these by June 1st the warmline continues. If not, it doesn't. Hopefully I'll get more than thirty and the subscription period could become 18 months or two years, but we'll have to wait and see.

Make cheques etc. payable to Andrew Muir and send to PO BOX 1494, Fulham, London, SW6 6PU. This is a non-profit making venture, it is no skin off my nose if it goes ahead or not - I guess it must be up to you.

### Cuttings Service

If you find life without **Bits & Bobs** unbearable - and it seems like some of you do - remember Mark Carter runs a newspaper cuttings service on a monthly basis. Write to him at 25 Marlborough Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 4PH for details. Write to the same man, same address, if you want to continue the adventures of Bob Dylan in cartoon format that I've been sending out as subscribers' inserts.

### Back Issues

A good number of you are awaiting these to complete your subscriptions and a good deal more of you have been waiting patiently for my many promises to come true. I am reprinting, just somewhat slowly! They will come out in batches of three with issues 1-3 scheduled for July this year. I shall write to you to inform you of their release date (or sending them, if you are already owed them) nearer the time.

April is the cruellest month, breeding late **Homers** and leaving me with the tricky business of writing a farewell editorial. UK subscribers received a Christmas letter detailing my reasons for stopping, European and American readers will get their versions with this so I will not repeat myself. However, the readers who get their **Homers** from the shops deserve some explanation particularly as they will not get the accompanying **Special Subscriber Issue** where the farewells are drawn out across many letters.

Therefore, I will make a farewell here but I will cheat by getting Bob Forryan to say my goodbyes for me in three letters he sent in November/December last year. This technique probably has a clever literary term like "occlusion" whereby I reveal my thoughts from a hidden perspective - it could also mean I'm just stuck for words. Whichever it may be, Mr. Forryan's letters provide an insightful and emotional goodbye from me and perfectly embody the openness implied in the title to this section.

### EXTRACTS OF LETTERS FROM BOB FORRYAN

7/11/93

...but I am really writing in response to your last letter. You will know by now that I have paid a further subscription to **Homer**, but thanks for the kind pretence that I've paid to "issue 82". God forbid that there should ever be an issue 82 - what the fuck will we all be like by then? Which is my unsubtle way of trying to comment on your statement that - or should I say question? - *who is to say there will be an issue 12?*

I think there will be an issue 12, I think there should be an issue 12. You are correct in thinking that issue 10 was a good one and you have every right to be pleased with it - my own contribution excepted..

However for some years now Mr. Bauldie has raised doubts as to whether it is worth continuing **The Telegraph** - but he keeps on (like Dylan perhaps he doesn't know what else to do?). But for all its gloss **The Telegraph** is in decline in my 'not so humble opinion' (C. Heylin). **Homer**, *the slut* is not in decline yet, but don't keep at it too long, Andrew. There are far more worthy projects in the world than producing a Dylan 'zine no matter how good it is. From what I know of you, I would guess you have enough restless creativity within yourself to achieve more. I don't want **Homer** to end yet but its life-span should be finite (God help me if I've failed to punctuate "its" correctly!).

Be on your guard, look out for the moment when the excitement begins to pall - know when to quit. Issue 15 would be great, issue 20 - O.K. But 30 or 40? I hope not. I doubt that we need it or that the flame can burn so long. Thank you for all your work. Keep on a while yet and I'll do what I can when I can - but no-one stays forever young.

16/11/93

..but the reason I'm writing, yet again, is that I've just received your (very moving) letter of the 14th November and the future of **Homer** is very much on my mind.

I think you should know first of all how much the opportunity to write for **Homer** has meant to me. I didn't know I had it in me and I thought the first article (**Another Side Of..**) would be the last. Your encouragement and the often amusing correspondence helped a great deal. Before I met Elaine I had led a pretty stilted sort of life. **Homer** gave me some emotional sustenance. Writing for your 'zine became a kind of therapy. In writing about Dylan I was able to put myself in touch with my emotions - to tackle some truths that I needed to face. **Across The Borderline** was particularly cathartic. I sometimes wonder if I would ever have left my wife if I hadn't written for **Homer**. I believe that my articles helped Elaine to see more in me than just the externals and, as a result, my whole life has been "opened up" in more ways than I can hope to explain in a letter....

And, so you see, **Homer** is extremely important to me. Therefore, when I agree with you that "this is finished" I speak from the heart - from someone who owes you and **Homer** a very great deal.

I've been looking back through some of our early correspondence. I remember being struck by how similar our thoughts were on various Dylan-related issues.

I quote from one of your own letters: *I was pleased that our thoughts and feelings were so similar.*

Then there were our shared doubts about the true quality of **Angelina**. Also the discussion about relativity in artistic criticism and your promised article on "Why criticize, Why Dylan?" - whatever happened to that, my friend?<sup>1</sup>

Most remarkably there was the time I once wrote to you that *if I never added anything to my collection I'd have enough to keep me in quality listening for the rest of my life*. This, apparently, was within one word of what you had said to Mark Carter the day before you received my letter.

So for all these reasons and more both **Homer** and Andrew Muir have been important friends these past 2 or 3 years.

Despite this, I believe you are right. The time has come, *the moment has passed already* as you say. If this is the way you feel then I am even more certain that it should be so. Maybe issue 11 should be the last. It is a cliché to say that less is often more, but it is often true. **Homer** will be valued more if its longevity is brief. It has provided an invaluable forum for a few of us and has been loved by its readers but *death is not the end*.

As I said last time, you have much more to offer the world - and your friends - than sweating for ever over **Homer**. Write a wonderful editorial for issue 11 and call it a day - even if my Yeats piece never gets published!<sup>2</sup>

18/12/93

Arrived home yesterday after 2 weeks away to find your "it's a goddamn impossible way of life" letter. A(nother) very moving letter - it is sad that **Homer** must end, but I have no doubts at all that it is the right decision for **Homer's** long-term reputation, for you and for me. It must be bloody awful having to send all those cheques back to all those hopeful and appreciative readers but you know it's right, Andrew.

You say, *I think my concentration on Dylan has been unreasonable and unhealthy* which is exactly the conclusion I had drawn for myself some months ago - thanks really to Elaine who has a wide range of literary and artistic interests and is still a real Dylan fan. Life is too short to make it so narrow and miss all the work of so many other great artists. I never did think Dylan was God!<sup>3</sup>

You mention also your intention to produce books and booklets and that I should *pretend* **Homer, the slut** is still going and keep writing. Well, I guess I will eventually...

I wanted some Yeats to finish this letter. I flicked the pages of my **Selected Poems** and they fell open at these lines. I swear it's true!

*We were the last romantics - chose for theme  
Traditional sanctity and loveliness  
Whatever's written in what poet's name  
The book of the people; whatever most can bless  
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme;  
But all is changed, that high horse riderless,  
Though mounted in that saddle HOMER rode  
Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood.*

<sup>1</sup> It is on exactly the same back burner as it was then, Bob, but one day, one day...

<sup>2</sup> Ah but it will come out in one of my new adventures, Bob, fear not.

<sup>3</sup> Me neither, Dylan's a much more careful craftsman. - Ed.



PS from Elaine Owen:

...like Robert I feel sure you're making the right decision. Something like **Homer** should be a labour of love not a chore, or an albatross. Have a happy, healthy, stress free '94.



Well as **Homer**, *the slut* goes to print as late as April '94 and the stress levels are a long way from coming down and it sure feels like a chore at the moment, I move from typing work documents to typing **Homer** with no difference in feeling; just another item on the "things to do today" list.

However, it is always like that at production time and I know I shall look back on this period of my life with great affection. I remember when I was 18 and hitching round France and Spain; I had food poisoning and had walked uphill for miles with a heavy rucksack and before I pitched my tent the heavens opened and drenched everything in sight. I swore to my future self that I'd never look back on that "adventure" with pleasure - but, of course, I do now and **Homer's** good memories already outweigh the bad by about 100 to 1 so I've no doubt that in a few years I'll never understand why I stopped.

To thank everyone for their help and to list all the happy meetings (including *the* happiest meeting) and friendships that have arisen due to the magazine would lead me into the land of sentimentality, you all know who you are and you surely know, too, the depth and sincerity of my gratitude.

I hope everyone finds something to enjoy in this issue and that you will be reading writings and publications from me for many years to come.

(Andrew Murray)

**Publicity Shot from the John Hume Collection**



**Send large s.a.e. to: John Hume, 6 Oaklands, Cradley, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR13 5LA for his extraordinary catalogue of Dylan photographs.**

**Introduction :** What can I say? Only two **Focus On**s done, and already mentioned by none other than Paul Williams (see **Homer, the slut** #10)! If that's not a great incentive to keep on keeping on, I don't know what is: his, and others', support for what **Focus On** is aiming to do, is very greatly appreciated. Actual contributions from **Homer's** readers are still a little thin on the ground, however, and I am grateful to Jim Heppell for being kind enough to send in a piece (see below) on **Chimes of Freedom**. How about making it a belated New Year's Resolution to send in a contribution yourself this year?<sup>1</sup>

### **CHIMES OF FREEDOM : Paula K. V. Radice**

*i know no answers an no truth  
for absolutely no soul alive  
i will listen t no one  
who tells me morals  
there are no morals  
an i dream a lot*

#### **(Some Other Kinds of Songs)**

Well, after complaining in last issue's **Focus On** (Homer #10) that I couldn't find much in the Dylan books about **Chimes of Freedom**, I have to confess that when I sat down to write about it myself, I had not a clue what I wanted to say (or how to say it). **Chimes of Freedom** is obviously a tremendous song, one of those that stand out on their respective albums. Admittedly, given that the song appears on **Another Side of Bob Dylan**, this isn't a particularly amazing achievement. I have always found that album patchy and frustrating, and remain bemused that alongside such obviously artistically successful songs as **Chimes** and **To Ramona** occur the eminently silly **Motorpsycho Nitemare** and **I Shall Be Free #10**, as well as the unfortunate **Ballad in Plain D**. It's an album that benefits from being listened to on C.D. - use the select button to pick out the gems and discard the fibreglass.

As you will see in the selected pieces beneath, many writers have attributed **Another Side's** motley nature to its transitional character, as Dylan moved from writing explicit protest songs to songs which made use of a more internalized, personal, and surreal language, and this seems to me a fully justifiable argument (see Michael Gross, David Pichaske, Michael Gray, Paul Williams etc, below): I disagree, however, with those who see **Chimes of Freedom** as the last of the protest songs (Wilfred Mellers, basing his argument on the fact that Dylan is here identifying with society's victims - *the countless confused, accused, misused, strung-out ones an' worse*). True, its length and weightiness seem to link it to earlier protest songs (**Hard Rain** being the obvious parallel - see below for a number of comparisons between the two songs). It has only very recently, however, achieved anything like an anthemic maturity, with its adoption by Bruce Springsteen for the cause of human rights campaigning, and with Dylan's own performing of it at the Clinton Inauguration, where it was clearly meant to convey some sort of message (and well might have done had it been possible to hear what any of the words were - even rendered at a more appropriate speed, however, it's not exactly a crowd-sing-along song).

Even in its chronological context (bearing in mind here Paul Williams' wise words on the dangers of trying to put artists' work within hindsight-driven contexts), **Chimes of Freedom** seems to me to be not so much a last of anything as one of the first of the new sort of songs that were to come to fruition on **Bringing It All Back Home**. It seems worth bearing in mind that **Mr. Tambourine Man** was already written when **Another Side** was recorded, and might have appeared on the album if things had turned out differently. **Chimes of Freedom** does, admittedly, re-echo the imagery of some earlier songs, especially those with a pantheistic, wonder-of-nature perspective like **Lay Down Your Weary Tune**, but such songs did not constitute the typical Dylan protest song (whatever that was). Its closest ties to earlier songs are its climatic imagery: as a recent B.B.C. 2 evening-long special devoted to the weather and weather forecasting recognized, Dylan is the most prolific user of meteorological imagery in popular music (make your own list, starting with **Blowin' in the Wind** ...). What does seem to be new about the song, however, and a pointer to the future, is - as a number of the writers below describe far better than I can - the stress upon the immediate, the personal, the world of the senses, which are, Dylan seems to be saying, all that can be trusted. The victims, the objects of Dylan's compassion, are no longer individuals (poor people like Hollis Brown, mistreated black people like Emmet

<sup>1</sup>Yes, why don't you? **Homer, the slut** hasn't so much died as moved address and **Focus On** - the original starting point for the whole magazine will continue whether it be in another 'zine, a series of booklets, electronic format or a combination of these three. The next song in **Focus On's** spotlight will be **Joey**, chosen for its controversial nature: what do you think of Dylan's appreciation of a gangster? Send to usual address - PO BOX 1494, Fulham, SW6 6PU.

Till, or Medgar Evers, or Hattie Carroll), but now a whole vertically-defined sub-class of *searching ones*, all those who somehow do not fit, and are ridden rough-shod over by a petty and uncaring society - the lonely, the gentle, the innocent, the *luckless*, the *abandoned*, the voiceless, all of them states of mind as much as states of being.

The tone of this compassion and identification also occurs on *Another Side* in the form of an appeal To *Ramona*, where one person's grief is being caused by the weight of society's expectations and pressures:

*... it grieves my heart, love,  
To see you trying to be a part of  
A world which just don't exist.  
It's all just a dream, babe,  
A vacuum, a scheme, babe,  
That sucks you into feeling like this*

This, and *Chimes of Freedom* seem to me to be tied to the world-visions of *Gates of Eden*, *It's Alright Ma* and *Desolation Row*, rather more than to those songs on previous albums which highlighted specific cases of injustice.

In *Chimes of Freedom*, Dylan contrasts puny, almost meaningless human understanding, with its relative, cultural, and inadequate, concepts of time and meaning, with the power and unity of natural forces, i.e. the thunder and lightning of a gigantic storm. His performance of it on the album is beautifully understated, deliberate and cutting at the same time. The words are carefully sung, in a voice that manages to be gentle, world-weary and strained simultaneously. The lovely, hymn-like, melody of the last lines of each verse redeems what might otherwise be a rather monotonous tune. Alliteration abounds, embodying the echoing, ringing chimes of the *bells of lightning and its thunder*.

*Tolling for the mistreated, mateless mother, the mistitled prostitute ...*

*Tolling for the searching ones, on their speechless, seeking trail ...*

*Tolling for the rebel, tolling for the rake ...*

*Spellbound and swallowed 'til the tolling ended...*

(Incidentally, the *poet and the painter far behind his rightful times* in the song as performed becomes the *unpawnd painter* in *Lyrics* - why?).

Talking personally, *Chimes of Freedom* always reminds me of a Summer night in 1982 when, during my A Levels (which were causing me a great deal of stress), an electric storm broke, at about 3 a.m., over the boarding school in Cornwall where I was unfortunate enough to be living: the noise was tremendous, the walls shook, everyone in the building woke up. From my window, I watched great forks of lightning crash down into the school car park, attracted to a metal drain cover, coming down only feet away from me and lighting everything up. An amazing sight, and a real experience. I can remember laughing, because the next day's exam was on *King Lear*, and the raging tempest seemed so appropriate:

*Blow winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!  
... You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,  
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world!  
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once  
That made ingrateful man!*

(Act 3, sc. 2)

Coincidentally, the very first Dylan concert I ever went to was on October 15th, 1987 - and I had to walk home in the dark at midnight through the hurricane that hit the South-East of England that night, with rain lashing down and the trees whipping about and even falling around me. That seemed appropriate too, after seeing Dylan.

**JIM HEPPELL**

**Chimes Of Freedom: Paradox And Points Of View** (First published here.)

In the notes to *Bringing It All Back Home* By Bob Dylan we read:

*the fact that the white house is filled with leaders that've never been t the apollo theater amazes me.  
why allen ginsberg was not chosen t read poetry at the inauguration boggles my mind*

the implication being, I suppose, how come people don't appreciate more what you get at the Apollo or from Ginsberg, and if the world leaders took more notice or appreciated that sort of thing, perhaps the world would be a better place ... a pious and naive hope in this world ruled by violence and the prince of the power of the air.

So less than 30 years on from that comment we find Bob Dylan inviting himself to the inaugural celebrations for the xth president of the USA. My reaction is Great - another performance by Bob!, and with **Chimes of Freedom** what an appropriate song to set before the government. While Terry Gans reacted favourably in *Telegraph* # 45, others have reacted with indifference, cynicism or outrage. In letters in the same issue, John Michael Hudtwalcker and Tony Tasman suggested catastrophic consequences for Bob Dylan giving support or endorsement to a President (the loss of integrity and independence, the making of a most foolish move), the former suggesting that the artist has lost even his *freedom*. But, no, it doesn't have to be that way.

Did we hear such cries of outrage when - responding to the brainless attempt of some journalist to elicit some hot copy critical of Ronald Reagan - Dylan refused to oblige muttering that it's all a joke. Neil Young stirred up adverse comment when he was quoted as making some comments which could be taken as supportive of the same president. Politics is, well, politics - you can declare a plague on all your houses but you find it difficult to keep out of it, whether by your absence or your presence. As for politicians and their parties:

- social clubs in drag disguise
- outsiders they can freely criticise
- tell nothing except who to idolise
- and say god bless him

(it's life and life only)

So does Dylan's appearance at the presidential stage signify allegiance to the masters of war? Not by any means. Does it suggest approval to a certain stance on social issues? Well maybe but probably not whichever particular issue you happen to champion. When we say God Bless America and unfurl the US flag, whose vision of America do we mean? This land is our land - yes but who are we? What would it really take to make Thomas Jefferson turn in his grave?

Maybe the point is that it is not the power, the ideas, the ideals even, that are the subject of protest but the **abuse** of power. In the same issue of *The Telegraph* Imre Salusinszky referred to Dylan being placed in the mainstream of American artistic traditions ... anti-intellectualism of American life - rather I would say that it is the **abuse** of intellect or whatever that Bob Dylan is anti: the motives of some who build big universities to study in, and the sorry state of affairs that university teachers - let alone their students - are unaware of what the Bible says.

Personally I think it is as inappropriate now for anybody to lecture Bob Dylan about political correctness as it was in 1985 about Charity Is Supposed To Cover Up A multitude Of Sins or in 1963 for expressing remarks seeming sympathetic to Lee Harvey Oswald. Politics - if we make the sweeping assumption about good intentions - is merely a temporary matter of opinion, whereas say life and death is a permanent matter of fact.

In the same issue of *The Telegraph* I was interested in Nigel Hinton's letter commenting on Bert Cartwright's essay on **Blowin In The Wind** - it seems to me that the answer ought to be obvious to everyone because the wind blows on everyone indiscriminately. Yet nobody can see the wind and it blows where it will. Another Woody Guthrie reference is of course used by Dylan in another song ... come with the dust ... gone with the wind - people and presidents come and go and so do questions and answers.

Another source for the wind is perhaps closer to home: **Ecclesiastes** which says that it is as useless to try to understand God's ways to men as it is to try and catch the wind - it may be that, though the answer is obvious, people will never take it to heart, human nature being what it is. If trying to catch the wind is futile



so is the reaction to Dylan's performing (as Ginsberg's substitute?) at the inauguration of President Clinton, the reaction expressed by *Homer's* editor (in # 9 & 10) to suggest that Bob has aligned himself with the work of the Devil or with, say, the machinery of war responsible for the cited example of the bombing of Baghdad.<sup>2</sup> I would say again not necessarily so (even Woody Guthrie wrote *Dear Mrs Roosevelt*) and ask what better song to put before a politician than the **Chimes of Freedom**?

Well, you might say, how about **The Times They Are A-Changin'?** - a song which includes a verse addressed specifically to the politicians - come senators, congressmen .. - as to everyone else (*come gather round people* ..). Interesting that Nigel Hinton (in the same letter) should put forward **The Times They Are A-Changin'** as an example of a song where both the singer and his audience can have seen the parents and children dichotomy from both sides of the wall; of course the composer of the song was able to see from all those perspectives at the time of composition; **Times** has been performed with the current NET group at a new musical peak.

What is obvious to me from a retrospective of Dylan's songs is the ability or will to attempt to look from different points of view ( we always did see the same, we just saw it from a different point of view) and later, unexpectedly, a paradox of experience - close up it's never that big.

One of the remarkable things about Bob Dylan is that as a young man he was able to come up with such wonderfully perceptive songs - he has subsequently commented on the wonder of this to him, let alone the less talented or gifted rest of us. One of the most enlightening comments about Bob Dylan and his lyrics to me has come - of course from the man himself - during that classic October 1964 concert: it is Halloween so the man on the stage is wearing a mask - his Bob Dylan mask; he goes on to say that this song about a boxer has nothing to do with boxing - even nothing to do with nothing - it's just taking the words from the newspapers (incidentally have you ever seen newspaper pages blowing to and fro in the wind? -Now there's symbolism) and rearranging them - **just like conversation really**. Oh yeah? - what a conversationalist! He went on to express the fervent hope that he would never have to work for a living. I don't believe that performing has ever become a chore for Bob.

That comment by Bob Dylan on his song writing technique can only be said to be enlightening if you recognise a characteristic irony; and irony, I suppose, is on the same sort of wavelength as paradox ...

So what is **Chimes of Freedom** about?

Let us get one thing straight before we go any further - it is not about drugs. (Anyone who says it is should be struck off immediately - it should be obvious that drugs are thoroughly exploited for evil.)

It is about freedom.

Well, maybe not freedom so much as escape.

It is about escape like another Dylan masterpiece **Mr Tambourine Man** - a song which has been performed so many more times than **Chimes** that the Washington performance is necessary to redress the balance - a song whose poetry also leaves me spellbound and starry-eyed, however many times I've heard it - down the foggy ruins of time, apt for illumination by the flashing chimes of freedom, we can evade worries about today, at least until tomorrow. This song too has been slandered as being about drugs, whereas **Mr Tambourine Man** is actually far more helpful - he could, for example, it occurred to me recently, be the first man who showed you how to chant *nam-myoho-rence-kyo* if tuning into that tone can really do anything for your environment.

**Chimes** tells the story of a night of freedom from unspecified constraints when the participants witness a spectacular storm. It is a night from sundown's finish to midnight's toll to the mist lifting as the darkness starts to clear. The opening line refers to time as distance - far between sundown and midnight - another journey of experience. The hypnotic mist is of the night as is the setting for **Mr Tambourine Man** - the night is the right time for these experiences - aint it just .. like **Visions of Johanna**. The song is replete with brilliant flashes of poetic phrases, use of words to be enjoyed for their own sake as much as the images they evoke - mad mystic hammering indeed. A religious intensity is added as the church bells cling in the cathedral evening. The natural storm takes over from the man made clinging of the wedding and church bells. The majestic bells of bolts serve to make the poet think of all life's underdogs - the storm seems to be flashing / striking / tolling for the list of them which the song enumerates, people who do not fit, who are oppressed or have

<sup>2</sup>Ed: Hey. I don't think I quite said that - though maybe that was the cause of one of Bob's 'uh-huh's while reading #9?!

refused to accept the norm, the paradox of the warrior who refuses to fight. The harmless who are persecuted because of, in spite of, their harmlessness, the outcast burning at stake - constantly because, *human nature being what it is*, the smug and comfortably successful never learn (and judgement on them is something you'll never see).



**Chimes of Freedom** lists various underdogs - but what does it say we are to do to help them? - only to recognise that we have mistitled the prostitute and imprisoned the harmless (along, we may hope, with the dangerous and guilty - like, perhaps, William Zantlinger) - we are invited to see from their point of view. Similarly, for a songwriter who has been claimed to be sounding the call to political action as the spokesman for a generation, **Times** does not propose a specific programme for political action, rather it calls for general recognition that the generations are rolling by as the wheel turns full circle. To express to those in power a support for the underdog is not an unworthy or reprehensible aspiration, whether we address Clinton or Roosevelt.

The participants - we who ducked, watched and were caught - in the narrative of **Chimes** themselves - perhaps a man and a woman who have gone through some unofficial form of marriage - wedding bells - watch the poems in naked wonder as we listen to Dylan's songs, maybe forgetting about today until tomorrow, disregarding the iron rule of time trapped by no track of hours - and who have found it worth their while starry eyed and laughing.

But theirs has been a temporary freedom - in the morning they are caught - like the rest of the victims for whom the storm chimed, they are not free in the sense of being well off or out of danger, but theirs is a spiritual freedom. They are not well off like those for whom the electric lights shine as the night gives way to morning, those who are protected from, cut off from, ignoring the elements (the electric light still glowed even though the morning light was starting to shine). These artificial lights are not shining for the victims/heroes of the song, the ones who are condemned to drift or else be kept from drifting - either you are free to wander rootless where you will (perhaps driven by the storm and not under your own control) - but this option equally is described as condemned - or else you are constrained and confined - condemned to ... be kept from drifting - prevented from the very drifting which though it seems a freedom is itself a life sentence. So is either alternative a freedom? The only freedom seems to be to contemplate the paradox of the **Chimes Of Freedom**.

But - if they can be regarded as free at all - the freedom of them who gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing is a spiritual freedom. For - as mysteriously as the images are evoked by thunder and lightning, so we have this paradoxical response in another song on **Another Side**: my friends from the prison ask about freedom and get this most mysterious answer -

*are the birds free from the chains of the skyway?*

(Ballad in Plain D).

It is paradoxical to answer with a question, but poetically effective. As with **Blowin' In The Wind**, perhaps it is more artistically satisfying to ask questions than to attempt to answer them - this is confirmed, it seems to me, by the general reaction to Dylan's Christian albums and the ideas behind them.

Paradox is where it's at, man, and, if you understand that, you can be free even in your prison. Paradox is stated in the warriors whose strength is not to fight, like the Christian turn the other cheek or Gandhi's non-violent revolution, perhaps. When finally the innocents of the song are caught - it is possible to ignore but not to escape time - they are still starry eyed and laughing (that as I recall adds a resounding depth, of what exactly? - subjectivity, illusion, pessimism - it was true then whatever *they* say now?). The paradox of unexpectedly watching yourself grow younger than that now, not older, as you recognise the folly of maturity pitted against a child's innocence.

I like the Washington version of **Chimes**. I like the version with the Grateful Dead, of course a mighty symbol of freedom. I like the *Temples in Flames* version where Roger McGuinn is pushed aside as Bob continues to sing when it is McGuinn's turn, and McGuinn responds by improvising a line about souls ascending to heaven. Who contributed these words and are they representative of the spirit of **Chimes of Freedom**? Certainly they exemplify a transcending spiritual freedom.<sup>3</sup> Maybe freedom is consolation for the suffering. You see, perhaps you have to be blind/deaf/unlearned to see/hear/comprehend the **Chimes of Freedom**.

## ALAN RINZLER

### Bob Dylan The Illustrated Record

**Chimes of Freedom** would appear to be a leftover political protest song, but these bells are ringing for no particular parochial cause, but for *every hung-up person in the whole wide universe...for each and every underdog...*, a somewhat broader inclusion than previously recorded. All-inclusive, pan-sympathetic, overstated in its repetition, tedious in its exhausting listless catalogue of *refugees, the rebel, the luckless, the outcast, the gentle, the mistreated, countless confused, accused, misused, strung-out ones an' worse*. But this song was one of Dylan's most popular of the time. It seemed to capture the last gasp of hope for the underdog after the devastating blow of John Kennedy's death.

**M.GROSS : Bob Dylan : An Illustrated History**

... As Richard Farina said in the liner notes for his own album *Celebrations for a Grey Day*, recorded at approximately the same period, Time, tide, and the accident of what the statisticians call birth have conspired to provide us with a tradition barely ours and hardly its own. Music, if it has a mind to, can sing about things like that, and maybe set one or two of them straight, yes? **Chimes of Freedom**, the most affecting song on this new disc, was singing about such things, at the same time that Dylan was circumscribing the world of his peers with a new one all his own. In the complex language he was beginning to use, tying the fragmentary images of a song like **Hard Rain** into the cohesive whole of **Chimes**, Dylan was beginning to create the language that would speak for everyone.

<sup>3</sup> Jim Heppell - >Again in the same issue of *Telegraph* (# 45 - what an issue (another great issue) that was - maybe these comments should have been sent to *Telegraph* not *Homer*, but then of course all who read *Telegraph* should read *Homer* too, shouldn't they? - and vice versa) we have references to Roger McGuinn's group The Byrds, who are credited with contributing to the so called folk rock revolution with versions of Dylan songs including of course **Mr Tambourine Man** and **Chimes Of Freedom**; they did also record **The Times They Are A-Changin'**, did they not? I was surprised because it was unexpected to me that David Crosby could be so perceptive about Bob Dylan as to recognise that the latter was light years ahead of the Byrds, and as to describe the conscious technique of avoiding the same thing twice - which puts Paul Williams' "serendipity" (page 151 of **Book One**) in a bright light.

**MICHAEL GRAY****Song and Dance Man: The Art of Bob Dylan**

By the time of the fourth album, **Another Side of Bob Dylan**, one very characteristic type of image has certainly emerged: images invoking the elements. Dylan notices winds, rain, and so on very keenly, and represents them as forces which impinge strongly, if not theatrically, in the action of his songs. His representation of them is distinctive ...

*... electric light still struck like arrows*

That line is from the 4th-album song **Chimes of Freedom**, which is in one way the central song of the album. Ostensibly, the opposite is true: it is the last explicit protest-song: the words have a message. Yet the message is not the important point - and it is almost as if Dylan uses this apparent message song to show his listeners that *significance lies elsewhere*. In doing that, the song offers the motto for the whole album. And indeed it has the album's sound to note which brings us to what is the importance of **Chimes of Freedom**: namely, that with this sound - the echo, the voice, the chiselled word-shapes; the sculptured, hard-grained phrasing - Dylan creates a world. It is in notable contrast that in the later, more out-of-this-world Dylan work, its force is, paradoxically, an interpretative one, not a sculptural.

**N.HENTOFF****The Crackin', Shakin', Breakin' Sounds (in C.McGREGOR: *Bob Dylan: The Early Years*)**

[During the **Another Side of Bob Dylan** recordings, Dylan said] *It's hard being free in a song - getting it all in. Songs are so confining. Woody Guthrie told me once that song's don't have to do anything like that. But it's not true. A song has to have some kind of form to fit into the music. You can bend the words and the metre but it still has to fit somehow. I've been getting freer in the songs I write, But I still feel confined. That's why I write a lot of poetry - if that's the word. Poetry can make its own form.*

As Wilson signalled for the start of the next number, Dylan put up his hand. *I just want to light a cigarette, so I can see it there while I'm singing*, he said, and grinned. *I'm very neurotic. I need to be secure.*

By ten-thirty, seven songs had been recorded.

*This is the fastest Dylan date yet*, Wilson said. *He used to be all hung up with the microphones. Now he's a pro.*

Several more friends of Dylan's had arrived during the recording of the seven songs, and at this point four of them were seated in the control room behind Wilson and the engineers. The others were scattered around the studio, using the table that held the bottles of Beaujolais as their base. They opened the bottles, and every once in a while poured out a drink in a paper cup. The three children were still irrepressibly present, and once the smallest burst into the studio, ruining a take. Dylan turned on the youngster in mock anger. *I'm gonna rub you out*, he said. *I'll track you down and turn you to dust.* The boy giggled and ran back into the control room.

As the evening went on, Dylan's voice became more acrid. The dynamics of his singing grew more pronounced, soft, intimate passages being abruptly followed by fierce surges in volume. The relentless, driving beat of his guitar was more often supplemented by the whooping thrusts of the harmonica.

*Intensity, that's what he's got*, Wilson said, apparently to himself. *By now, this kid is outselling Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis, he went on, to me. He's speaking to a whole new generation. And not only here. He's just been in England. He had standing room only in Royal Festival Hall.*

Dylan had begun a song called **Chimes of Freedom**. One of his four friends in the control room - a lean, bearded man - proclaimed, *Bobby's talking for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe.* His three companions nodded gravely.

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**WILFRID MELLERS****A Darker Shade of Pale**

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Prophetic songs like **When The Ship Comes In** and visionary songs like **A Hard Rain [sic]** set the stage for Dylan's second period which is broached, though not conclusively entered, in his fourth album, appropriately called **Another Side Of Bob Dylan** (1964). Links with his earlier songs are obvious enough: **I Shall Be Free No.10** is a talkin' number with a political burden, while **Chimes of Freedom** might be described as the last of the protest songs, with an apocalyptic undertow. There is, however, a difference: the victims who are involved and prayed for are not merely casualties of an unjust economic system, but rather the *countless confused, accused, misused, strung-out ones an' worse*. There is therefore a connection between such public appeals for freedom and the more personal songs in which Dylan seeks escape from any human relationship that threatens his personal integrity. These songs are not really cruel, because he is asking the other person not to fear self-knowledge.

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**STEPHEN SCOBIE****Visions of Johanna**

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While rain may be read as heroin or cocaine, it also has other resonances within Dylan's work. In **Love Minus Zero/No Limit**, in the line *The night blows cold and rainy*, it is associated with the loneliness and fragility of his lover, who is outside in the rain, *At my window with a broken wing*. In **Chimes of Freedom**, it is a force of liberation and the proclamation of truth, as *the rain unravelled tales/For the disrobed faceless forms of no position*. In **Lay Down Your Weary Tune**, it is part of the triumphant celebration of pantheistic unity through nature: *The cryin' rain like a trumpet sang/And asked for no applause*. In **Percy's Song**, the repeated chorus, *Turn, turn, to the rain/And the wind* suggests that the rain is an emblem of fate or decay. And of course, most memorably of all, that destiny becomes the fate of all humanity in **A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall**.

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**JOHN HERDMAN****Voice Without Restraint**

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There are whole songs whose rhythms differ essentially from those of a poem, and where the imagery is lush, the effects brasher, the meaning thinner than would be acceptable in a poem that was not also a song: **Chimes of Freedom** is a good example of such a work.

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**SUZANNE MACRAE****Bob Dylan Is The Weatherman (in E.THOMSON (ed.): *Conclusions on the Wall*)**

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The minstrel show figure, a white man in black face, has frequently been interpreted as psychedelic escape. But more precisely, I think he is Dylan's ragged clown musician seeking temporary aesthetic release from time and circumstance, *with all memory and fate driven deep beneath the waves*. He opens Dylan's ears to hear the Chimes of Freedom, tolling for the *aching ones whose wounds cannot be nursed...An' for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe*. These bells summon men to create the new age of justice and love that is more clearly defined in **Gates of Eden**. There, silence is golden, light rules dark, and laughter abounds. Art releases Dylan's imagination from bondage to despair.

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**ROBERT SHELTON****I Can Change, I Swear (in E.THOMSON (ed.): *Conclusions on the Wall*)**

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I think it's pitiable for any of us to allow ourselves to live vicariously through Dylan. *That* kind of hero-worship is essentially an indictment of the emptiness of the blind adulator's life. What I get from him, personally, and through songs and interviews, is a recurring disregard for those who are snug in their academic or suburban cocoons, who let others take all the chances for them.

Contrast **Like a Rolling Stone** with **Chimes of Freedom** and **Idiot Wind** with **You're a Big Girl Now** to understand that the anger/hatred/challenge, the yelp, must be expunged before the underlying compassion can spread its unguents,...



**DAVID PICHASKE****The Poetry of Rock**

**Another Side** is an album of the self independent of others, an album of denial and rejection even of Dylan's closest New York friends. It is a mediocre, confused album and flies off in a lot of directions, but it also indicates the direction in which Dylan was heading stylistically and technically ... Most important, Dylan has begun to view others as actual extensions of himself, rather than merely seeing similarities between other real people and his own self. The distinction is fine, but in terms of technique it's crucial. **To Ramona**



contains important ambiguity: Dylan talks to both his girl and his earlier self: *From fixtures and forces and friends your sorrow does stem.* Is this Dylan to his girl, or Dylan to himself? Or the Chimes of Freedom ringing for every hung up person in the whole wide universe - is not one of these persons Dylan, imprisoned in his role as high priest of protest? ... many of the people Dylan writes about from here on out will be Dylan himself, either in whole or part. For it was by talking to himself this way that the poet arrived ultimately at what Jon Landau has called Bob Dylan, moderate man, the self of **John Wesley Harding** and later albums.

It is **Chimes of Freedom** and **I Shall Be Free No. 10** that really indicate not only Dylan's recognition of the problem confronting him, but his immediate solution. In the former, Dylan leaves the mountain and ocean of **Hard Rain** and ducks inside a doorway, safe from the revolutionary transformations going on around him. He rejoices in change, alright, but remains throughout the song a detached observer.

**BOB SARLIN****Turn It Up, I Can't Hear the Words.**

So Dylan abandons the old politics with this album; but he does not turn completely away from the social ideas that formed the basis for his earlier work. With **Chimes of Freedom**, a long and beautiful political song, he attempts for the last time to relate his own view of the political world, and what emerges is a broad and underdog-oriented humanism. The song runs through a list of those who need sympathy and seems almost to say to the listener, Go ahead, if you want to fight for someone, here they are, those who need your help. But the rest of the album makes it clear that Dylan can no longer fight those battles, that he must move on to a deeper and more austere set of struggles. He states this simply and beautifully at the end of his poem on the back of the album sleeve.

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**DAVID DOWNING**


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**Future Rock**

**Another Side of Bob Dylan**, the next album, found They to be all those who stood between man and his true consciousness, be they the Masters of War, or his former Movement friends demanding new platitudes to justify their They, or women who wished to turn him into something he wasn't. Anyone who possessified, ideologized, abstractified, image-ized relationships, in love or in politics, was now fair game for Dylan's sharpening wit. They were all, as he would later recognize, both half-real and half-externalization of his own ego.

In the place of ideas Dylan championed the forgotten kingdom of the senses. The trouble with society, his songs said, was that it had, literally, lost its senses. The only real chimes of freedom were the mystic rhythms of the rain and thunder; those imprisoned were they whom false consciousness had removed from their rightful place in the flow of all things. **Lay Down Your Weary Tune**, written around the same time as **Percy's Song**, is a pantheistic hymn to the natural universe. The sky and the sea made music that no man could hope to emulate, but which every man could lay down within. This evocation of sensual experience is by no means confined to the countryside; in **Chimes of Freedom** the outcasts stand in an urban doorway, "*spellbound and swallowed*" by the thunderstorm, its flashing glory held like a mirror to the human race, "*the searching ones, on their speechless, seeking trail*". These are the characters who inhabit the songs of love - people grasping for something that isn't there, and either finding pain in failure or self-negation in success ...

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**PAUL WILLIAMS**


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**Performing Artist: The Music of Bob Dylan**

Hentoff says Dylan told him at the [**Another Side**] session, Those records I've made, I'll stand behind them, but some of that was jumping into the scene to be heard and a lot of it was because I didn't see anybody else doing that sort of thing. Now a lot of people are doing finger-pointing songs. You know - pointing to all the things that are wrong. Me, I don't want to write *for* people anymore. You know - be a spokesman...From now on, I want to write from inside me, and to do that I'm going to have to get back to writing like I used to when I was ten - having everything come out naturally. The way I like to write is for it to come out the way I walk or talk.

Dylan surely didn't talk like *even though a cloud's white curtain in a far-off corner flared or half-wracked prejudice leaped forth* or even *I don't want to fake you out, take or shake or forsake you out*. And yet the quote captures the essence of his evolving creative process: these songs, these lines, are from inside him, as opposed to something written to meet anyone's standards or satisfy anyone's expectations. And the written songs, when he performs them, come out exactly as free and honest, naked and natural, as a person walking across a room or talking to a friend or stranger.

.....The truly outstanding performance of the evening, of the album, is **Chimes of Freedom**. Dylan sings it not only as though this is the only moment there is, there is no second chance, he has to put everything into this take, but also as if he came back from France and Greece, agreed to come to the recording session, agreed to go on with his career and actually make another album, only for the purpose of getting this song on tape. As though he'd stayed alive this long only to do this.

Talking about an artist's work chronologically can be deceiving - it makes us, writer and reader both, tend to treat each individual work as though it is part of a process of development, part of some heroic saga of personal and artistic growth (or decline). Or we see it as an episode in the dramatic story of the artist's relationship with his audience. There's truth and much of interest in all this, but it can distract us from the fact that every work, each performance, also exists outside of time, and in fact derives its primary power from its content rather than its context. This is evident when we place 1964's **Chimes of Freedom** alongside the 1962 **A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall**. Here are two mountains Dylan has climbed, two places he's visited and reported from with searing intensity. The greatness of Dylan's body of work rests on the power of each of his great performances taken separately as much as it does on the awesomeness of his achievement considered as a whole. In fact we cannot actually listen to more than one performance at a time. It is tempting to try and simplify the overwhelming oeuvre of a prodigious artist such as Dylan or Picasso by creating biographical or aesthetic periods in which to group his work, or by setting up standards by which a few works can be singled out as most successful or important. I plead guilty to both approaches, and believe a slightly misleading order may be preferable to none at all, but caution the reader not to take such arbitrary contexts too seriously.

In the end, an individual listener has an experience of an individual recording; and greatness in art depends on what occurs in the privacy of that experience.

When *Another Side of Bob Dylan* was released, I didn't like *Chimes of Freedom*. I thought it was long and repetitious and that the image of *chimes of freedom flashing* was impossibly awkward and confused - embarrassing, if you will. Having formed that opinion and having expressed it to someone, I held onto it for a long time. And probably as a result, I heard the song many scores of times over the years without ever noticing its narrative content: it's a song about feelings evoked while watching a lightning storm. I've spoken to others who also failed to connect with this basic information, even while speculating on the significance of some of the more abstruse imagery in the lyrics.

This is the story Dylan tells: he and someone else (friend or friends) are caught in a thunderstorm in mid-evening and duck into a doorway, where they are transfixed by one lightning flash after another lighting up the sky. Dylan has a synesthetic vision (vision is not quite the right word, since what he experiences is auditory and ultimately emotional, empathetic, not visual) in which the lightning flashes (and the accompanying thunder) are experienced as the tolling of bells (like church bells, wedding bells, with implications of the Liberty Bell perhaps).

The lightning bolts become chimes, and sight and sound get all intermixed (*majestic bells of bolts struck shadows in the sounds/Seeming to be the chimes of freedom flashing*). And as the Liberty Bell tolled to proclaim American independence, and church bells in general toll to celebrate a wedding or mourn a death or call to the faithful, Dylan experiences each lightning bolt as tolling (or flashing or striking or cracking or firing) for someone, specifically, for the underdogs, the needy, the modest, the meek of the earth Christ refers to in the Sermon on the Mount. (I am reminded of Dylan's fall 1963 letter to Broadside where he says he's *listenin t Pete sing Guantanamera for the billionth time* - the key line of the song is *with the poor people of the world, I cast my fate*.)

What Dylan experiences is a series not of thoughts but of palpable feelings - each illuminating flash is felt as a bell note, vibrating in his heart and evoking one after another of the legions of the forgotten: *flashing for the refugees on the unarmed road of flight...tolling for the luckless, the abandoned and forsaken...tolling for the searching ones, on their speechless, seeking trail/for the lonesome-hearted lover with too personal a tale/and for each unharmed, gentle soul misplaced inside a jail* (in 1986 he was still dedicating songs to this latter group).

Dylan and friends watch the lightning as the storm rages around them (*the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail* - Dylan often writes of the weather; in this case the hard rain is already falling, but far from the bitter apocalypse of the earlier song, this time it's a Shakespearian tempest in which visions are revealed to those with hearts to see). Eventually the storm begins to break, signaled by the appearance of a white cloud in a corner of the sky and the slow lifting of the mist, and Dylan and his friends are still *starry-eyed and laughing* as they were when the storm trapped them, uncertain whether it's been five minutes or five hours (*trapped by no tracks of hours for they hang'd suspended* - timelessness is a thread running through many of Dylan's finest songs). In the course of the song, the lightning flashes have been described as *the sky cracked its poems in naked wonder* and *tales that the rain unravelled* and *electric light striking like arrows*. The imagery is fairly direct but it pours over the listener in such a torrent that the mind can't keep up; clearly Dylan would like to switch his listeners' senses as his have been, push them over the edge into an unpredictable world of their own visions.

And he is successful. The listener is pulled in by the conviction of the singing, the shivering beauty of Dylan's performance, his brief, penetrating harmonica solos and extraordinarily sensitive guitar accompaniment. The song itself not only demands attention but speaks directly to the heart before the lyrics have even begun to resolve themselves into any kind of communication. And then fragments of phrases begin to jump out at the listener exactly like lightning-illuminated glimpses of a familiar yet unreal landscape; *fired but for the ones* [I always heard "*fiery but barbed ones*"] *condemned to drift or else be kept from drifting* and *starry-eyed and laughing* and *the misdemeanour outlaw chained and cheated by pursuit* (third in a series of remarkable misses) and ultimately, unforgettably,

*Tolling for the aching ones whose wounds cannot be nursed  
For the countless confused accused misused strung-out ones and worse  
And for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe...*

This may not be great poetry. But it is inimitable songwriting and performing, a rush of wild lyricism, that is both the unmistakable product (and announcement) of Dylan's need to move beyond conscious imagery and specific storytelling and find techniques for getting exponentially more of his inner sense out onto vinyl...and

a breathtaking tour de force that could only have come from Dylan and would be equally breathtaking and perverse no matter at what period in his life or career he happened to burst out with it. For me, finding myself hopelessly drawn to and deeply enriched by the song decades after I first heard it and rejected it is a warning and promise of how much else I may have been deaf to, how unlikely it is that I will in a lifetime discover even all the high points of what Dylan's opus has to offer me. A hundred times I probably heard this one, before ever seeing the lightning...

## ROBERT SHELTON

### No Direction Home

**Chimes of Freedom** : In language, sweep, universality, and compassion, one of his most profound song-poems. This is among my half-dozen favorite Dylan works, a triumph of word-color and metaphor encompassing humanity. Dylan's affinity with the underdog has rarely attained such noble expression. He hears the *chimes of freedom flashing* for a legion of the abused. This is perhaps Dylan's most political song and his greatest love song, for he is extending his love and identification: ... *for the aching ones whose wounds cannot be nursed/For the countless confused, accused, misused, strung-out ones an' worse* ...

The song is set in a dramatic storm, a *wild cathedral evening*, developing his favorite metaphor of tempest: *Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail/The sky cracked its poems in naked wonder*.

Jack MacDonough sees this as part of an album that is making an excursion into a Romantic, Blakean childhood ... **Chimes of Freedom** is an emotional protest against emotional deprivation. The song is laden with extravagant and often violent imagery known as synesthesia, the supervividness found in Poe, Hart Crane, and notably in Rimbaud's **Sonnet of the Vowels**, in which colors emerge from common vowels. In her paper, *Bob Dylan and French Symbolist Poetry*, Belle D. Levinson found in **Hard Rain** and **Chimes of Freedom** a Dylan whose style as well as theme is close to Rimbaud's. I find **Chimes of Freedom** a landmark lyric in which Dylan has progressed from **Hard Rain** towards his full poetic powers.

Many waited [in late 1964] for the November release of **Another Side** to confirm that Dylan was going apolitical. In December, a **Broadside** writer, Paul Wolfe, who Dylan had praised, treated Newport '64 as the point when Ochs emerged the political-song champion and Dylan renounced protest. The new Dylan, Wolfe found, has defected ... into higher forms of art. Pitting Dylan vs. Ochs, the writer weighed meaning vs. innocuousness, sincerity vs. utter disregard for the tastes of the audience, idealistic principle vs. self-conscious egotism. Wolfe deemed **Tambourine Man** a failure, and lambasted **Chimes of Freedom** for raising bewilderment to the highest degree.

## STEPHEN SCOBIE

### Alias Bob Dylan

The human creation of music, both by voice and by instruments, becomes the image for the beauty and infinity of the natural world [in **Lay Down Your Weary Tune**]. This metaphor also occurs in other Dylan songs. **Chimes of Freedom**, for instance, replays the sense of mystic unity found in **Lay Down Your Weary Tune** but adds the experience of the social world. The chimes are heard not just by a solitary watcher on the shoreline but by a group of friends in the city, and they toll for the refugees, the rebel, the outcast: *every hung-up person in the whole wide universe*. The metaphor of this song presents a thunderstorm as *majestic bells playing in a wild cathedral evening*. Synaesthesia is used again, since it is the flashes of lightning (visual) rather than the crashes of the thunder (aural) that are presented as chimes.

In these songs the site and source of inspiration are located outside the singer: in the shoreline of **Lay Down Your Weary Tune** or in the thunder and lightning of **Chimes of Freedom**. Yet that outside is always potentially interiorized, since the natural metaphor is a metaphor for the creative power of the singer himself. This paradox of inspiration, as something simultaneously coming to the artist from somewhere else and arising from within his imagination, has traditionally been represented through the figure of the Muse. As a goddess, a figure separate from the artist, the Muse is the external source of inspiration, something that the

artist cannot fully control. Yet she is also the projection of the artist's inner creativity; for when he addresses her, he is also addressing himself.

## CLINTON HEYLIN

### Behind the Shades

**Chimes of Freedom** was bound to be the standout track on the album ... The inconsistency in the material on **Another Side** was precisely the result of being too close to the experiences he was drawing on. He was still experimenting with the style of language found on **Chimes of Freedom** and **Mr. Tambourine Man**...

## TIM RILEY

### Hard Rain

... Dylan's singing usually makes you forget about melody altogether: when he sings **Chimes of Freedom**, among his best tunes (and a terrific Byrds cover), Dylan's stark, inelegant approach upstages the way the melody is winning you over with each verse. He gets away with it because his words are cast with such rhythmic elan that they dance all over his stiff meters - they make their impact without relying on melody at all ...

The compassion that laces all the complaints in **All I Really Want to Do** and **It Ain't Me Babe** is round with idealism and humor, and the baroque surrealism that gilds **Chimes of Freedom** flaunts an imaginative grasp of social subjects that returns to the visionary core of **Freewheelin'**. These protest songs are cut loose from topicality ... **Chimes of Freedom** is the baroque-idealist flip side of the minimalist humility of **Ballad of Hollis Brown**.

## BOB SPITZ

### Bob Dylan - A Biography

**Chimes of Freedom** ... marks a turning-point in Bob's development as a songwriter. Loaded with imagery and metaphor, it paints surrealistic montages, one after the next, using a concurrence of phrases and rhymes. The lyric percolated with jingling alliterations like *majestic bells of bolts*, *mad mystic hammering*, and *disrobed faceless forms*. In one stanza, the *sky cracked its poems in naked wonder*. More than ever, Bob was experimenting with the *sound* of words - combining, juxtaposing, and overlapping them, regardless of meaning, to create a mood. Not that **Chimes of Freedom** is meaningless. On the contrary, what evolved from it *was* a narrative full of substance and force. But the lyric, like the most splendid symbolist poetry, gleaned its significance from interpretation.

For nearly twenty-five years, students of Dylanology have feasted on Bob's cryptic lyrics. They've read into the metaphors great philosophical relevance rife with Freudian undertones. Robert Shelton theorized that in **Chimes of Freedom**, Bob is developing his favorite metaphor of tempest ... he is extending love and identification. Another pundit called the song a modern excursion into a Romantic, Blakean childhood ... an emotional protest against emotional deprivation. But as Freud himself said, Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. Bob Dylan wrote songs whose lyrics were often amalgams of clever phrases that flowed poetically from beginning to end. When he told Carl Sanburg, I'm a poet, too, he meant exactly that - he wrote stanzas chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound and rhythm. However, in a song, the poetry is sometimes just part of the machinery used to keep the entire process in gear. And occasionally it derived entirely from good dope.

## ANDREW MUIR

### First published here

### INTRODUCTION: STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND CONTEXT

Many of the writers above comment on the way the poetic images strike through the song just as the lightning strikes through the storm. Indeed they do and just as the lightning pierces the misty rain so it illuminates - in these poetic flashes - the songwriter's thoughts and sensibilities, (and, it is to be hoped, the listener's). I would also be hardly the first to point out that the imagery of the song cascades toward the listener in much the same way as the rain pours down in the storm - breathtaking and overwhelming. What no-one seems to have mentioned is how Dylan manages this without the poor listener drowning in the torrent of synaesthetic



imagery. Instead we are able to leave the song "starry-eyed and laughing" just as the participants in the storm leave their shelter; uplifted and full of wonder rather than overpowered and, at best, impressed with verbal trickery.

What Dylan does is to provide the listener a shelter too, unobtrusive it may be, but we are held and protected throughout the avalanche of rich images by the tight structure of the song. I think that before we look at the verses of the song it is worth spending a little time on the overall structure - indeed, I believe it essential.

We have six verses of eight lines each, the last two are preceded by harmonica breaks of varying lengths depicting the gradual lifting of the storm. The rhyming structure is consistently **abcbbdde**<sup>4</sup>

In each verse the first quatrain of **abab** describes the physical situation of the songwriter as a participant in a city storm scene. In every verse the second quatrain consists of three lines - **ddd** - followed by the never changing last line of:

*And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.*

It is a tightly crafted song and it has to be, otherwise all the poetic tricks, techniques and effects that the young Dylan employed in his enthusiastic burst of poetry that so characterizes this album would seem just that - clever verbal trickery.

It seems strange to think of Dylan being decried for deserting "Protest songs" when ones listens to this protest song *par excellence*. A song later to be used as an anthem for *Amnesty*. All the fuss is caused by the lack of specificity and the overtly poetic language. Dylan here is a young poet striving for effect and, occasionally this shows to his detriment - as it does in the contemporaneous **My Back Pages**. However, both these songs are the result of highly wrought craftsmanship, this is no untutored genius springing from the city streets. (Whatever he might want you to believe.) The album also betrays evidence of wide reading, in fact, Dylan wears his influences on his sleeve. Just as the great Scottish poet Robbie Burns cultivated the image of a poet almost divinely conjured from the soil (when all his work displays great craftsmanship and knowledge of the classics) so Dylan's image as a poet sprung from the city streets is somewhat at odds with the obvious poetic influences of various Romantic, Symbolist and Modernist poets and the care with which the songs on this album are constructed.

Nevertheless, as stated above, he is a young voice here and he can get too carried away. This is not to deny that the naiveté and enthusiasm are not charming in their own right but compare **Chimes Of Freedom** and **My Back Pages** with **Every Grain Of Sand** and **Blind Willie McTell** and you will see the greater power of the mature songwriter who expends not one superfluous syllable.

### VERSE ONE

Having opened with a declaration of the consistency of structure I will immediately point out that verse One is a little exceptional in this regard! (It is in content too, but more of that later.) This is precisely because it is the opening verse. The first four lines set the scene in each verse and the writer has to be more specific in the introductory verse and he drives his point home by making the fourth and eighth lines identical. The first verse tells us what has happened and sets up the way the whole song will work.

The opening line *-Far between sundown's finish and midnight's broken toll* - gives us the time of day - or at least it would if we knew when the sun went down! In fact it is quite vague - where exactly is "far between" the sun finally setting and midnight? The effect that Dylan is after is, of course, something far greater than telling us that it is "21:32 and 15 seconds". The line serves the dual purpose of preparing us for the suspension of normal time and, with the slightly ominous use of "finish" and "broken" to introduce us to the beginning of a battering of **Everything is Broken** intensity. The opening line ends with the word *toll* and it is to be such a crucial word in this song and used so effectively that it amazes me Dylan has never returned to it in later songs.

The listener is also introduced to the song's characteristic imagery - alliterative and synaesthetic as in: *bells of bolts struck shadows in the sounds*. Synaesthesia is the linking together of multiple senses, such as hearing colours or seeing sounds. It is nowadays seen as an abnormal psychological state - although many see it as a throwback to an earlier stage in humankind's development - or, as here, as a poetic technique. (If indeed there was such an earlier stage in our development, Dylan's mid sixties use of this technique makes

<sup>4</sup>The last line is the same in every verse and can often appear as another **b** rhyme or half rhyme - particularly as it ends with an "ing" sound which is prevalent throughout the song. Nonetheless it stands as a separate line in the structure of the poem although it can be used to special effect with the **b** rhyme as in Verse One.

me inclined to think we took a(nother) wrong turning somewhere!) What the poet, artist, songwriter or whatever tries to do with this technique is to heighten his audiences perceptions, in our particular case to try and make the listener feel what he felt. (Unfortunately - like so many literary techniques that Dylan employed - the following years saw imitators employ them simply for their own sake and immature excess and gibberish resulted.)

This technique is a particular favourite of the Romantic school of poetry whose practitioners are often prone to achieve and report on states of heightened perception. It will not take me to point out to you that the "suspension of time" and synaesthetic techniques were to be used to great effect by Dylan in other songs of this time. As Jim Heppell notes earlier this song has nothing to do with drugs or a drug-induced experience but it is not difficult to see why many people have used this song as a "tripping" song - in this case the state is achieved courtesy of Mother Nature's storm and Dylan's poetic recounting.

The first verse is unique in the way in which the *ddd* lines are all connected by "soldier" type imagery perhaps because Dylan didn't want to throw too much at us in the first verse in fear of disorientating us, or perhaps he planned at this stage to have each verse tied to a specific "theme". It is worth noting in passing the phrase *the warriors whose strength is not to fight* which, in addition to being very thought provoking in its own right, perhaps had particular connotations for Dylan in relation to the "Folk Protest Movement" of the time.

### VERSE TWO

The physical scene is well painted in the opening four lines as the singer and his companion(s) press closer to the wall for protection.

The reference to "wedding bells" here seems to point out the fragility of human hopes and institutions in the face of nature's power - it appears as just another piece of stage-setting but, in fact, it will have a contrasting echo later in the song. *Dissolved* is a key word in this quatrain, the song is full of shifting, misty, formless images.

The triple *d* rhymes here contain an interesting collection of characters for whom the bells are tolling. Some of the characters are complimentary, some are typical of Dylan throughout his career, some seem to have stepped directly out of the songs in his preceding work. It is interesting too that the tautology of *the abandoned and forsaken* works so effectively here - it is not always so in this song.

### VERSE THREE

Although some of this song is naive, young man's poetic strutting, the opening to this verse is magical:

*Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail  
The sky cracked its poems in naked wonder*

This is pretty impressive on the page and is magnificent when sung with Dylan's unequalled gifts of expression. Any fool can string words together that alliterate, but to come up with an alliterative phrase like *mad mystic hammering* that also harmonizes with the meaning of the passage while all the time having the exact onomatopoeic effect desired is the stamp of genius.

The second line constitutes an exact summation of the whole experience from the participant's viewpoint. In years to come I hope there is an "O-Level" question asking: "What is **Chimes Of Freedom** about?" just so someone can answer "It is about how the sky cracked its poems in naked wonder."

As the storm becomes more intense the church bells are finally blown away after tenaciously holding on.

The second quatrain is somewhat confusing, even ignoring the bizarre alteration to what he sings that appears in *Lyrics*,... It is a very odd collection of characters: 'the gentle' and the 'kind' certainly fit as do 'the poet and the painter' who are out of time. It is more common, of course, for artists to be misunderstood because they are ahead of their time and it is intriguing that the word "beyond" is used in *Lyrics*.<sup>5</sup> However the middle of these three lines has always struck me as rather odd for Dylan at this time. He seems to be placing *the guardians and protectors of the mind* in some good company while in other songs of the time he was coming

<sup>5</sup>Just to be completely mystifying the word "behind" is not removed but the poet is and the painter becomes "unpawnd" thus transforming *And the poet and the painter far behind his rightful time* into *And the unpawnd painter behind beyond his rightful time!*

down pretty hard on teachers, professors, etc. I realize that the phrase does not necessarily equate to such instructors but the connotations of *guardians and protectors* are of restriction, not enlightenment. Also the tautology here seems unnecessary and wasteful. On this last point I have not changed my mind but on Dylan's attitude to *guardians and protectors of the mind* I have begun to see that I had too simplistic a view of things. All the time I've been writing about **Chimes Of Freedom** I have been hearing lines not only from it but from **My Back Pages**:

*In a soldier's stance I aimed my hand  
At the mongrel dogs who teach  
Fearing not I'd become my enemy  
In the instant that I preach  
My existence led by confusion boats*

and of course the phrase the "mongrel dogs who teach" comes not from the newly enlightened artist but the old misguided Dylan. Therefore perhaps these "mongrel dogs" were misunderstood *guardians and protectors of the mind* whom Dylan in his former years (and me in my sloppy interpretation of Dylan's thoughts on the matter) had been unable to differentiate from "self ordained professors". Perhaps, too, ideas can be passed on to beneficial effect rather than be used as "maps" which will lead you only onto "confusion boats".

#### VERSE FOUR

Another stunningly poetic opening couple of lines, "wild cathedral evening" always seems to get all the praise but "rain unravelled tales" is just as good. The third line seems odd and out of place both in terms of meaning and structure, it is, though, important as a reference point for a line in the following verse.

The first couplet of our familiar *ddd* triplet is marvellous; line one lists three sensory deprived groups of people while line two is about one section of the "downtrodden." It is a line that should be well heeded today as a hypocritical government and its lapdog press try to turn these particular "abandoned and forsaken" into societal scapegoats:

*For the mistreated mateless mother, the mistitled prostitute*

Of all the clever uses of alliteration in this song, I find this the most stunning. The mixture of the soft, comforting "m" sounds with the harsh, sibilant "s"s perfectly encapsulates the line's meaning. This is one heck of a line for a so called misogynist to write. It is also a line any poet would be proud of as it scans perfectly, uses internal rhythm and alliteration to maximum benefit and even includes an outrageously successful pun in *mistitled prostitute* ("miss, titled prostitute") that sums up the entire import of the line.

The third line is a nonsense - but he somehow gets away with it:

*For the misdemeanour outlaw. chased and cheated by pursuit*

It reminds me of Paul Williams writing about **Talkin' New York** (in *Performing Artist Volume One*), Paul wrote about Dylan's ability to put things in such a way that, unless we study it carefully, we hear something different - possibly contradictory - to what the words actually say:

*I don't suggest that this is intentional on his part. On the contrary, I use it as an example of Dylan being in control of his communication (what we actually hear, what we think he said) but not his words.*

I happen to think that Dylan does sometimes intentionally utilize this technique but often uses it as Mr. Williams describes. I never doubted what this line meant from the first time I heard it until today when I come to think hard about it for the first time. Whatever, doesn't it sound great? Aren't you on the side of this poor, hunted outlaw who probably has a heart of gold? What's a misdemeanour anyway - nothing to be hounded about, that's for sure.

\*\*\*\*\* There is a harmonica break of five seconds to supplement the guitar break between verses -the storm is beginning to lift but slowly. \*\*\*\*\*

#### VERSE FIVE

Again the physical theatre is marvellously evoked, again alliterative onomatopoeia is employed to spell-binding effect. Just read aloud the following phrase:

*Electric light still struck like*

You can almost feel the arrows striking.

This is followed by a typical Dylan double-bind of a line:

*Condemned to drift or else be kept from drifting.*

A drifter is often a heroic figure in Dylan's Guthriesque landscapes. He is the honest man unshackled by society's constraints, we want him to drift and, if caught, to break free when the lightning strikes. Here, although the lightning is striking, the figure is *kept from drifting* - a tragedy. It is also a tragedy to be *condemned to drift* - to be made homeless, *abandoned and forsaken*, not out of choice but out of injustice and persecution. Another message, unfortunately, for our time and place from this timeless protest song.

The **ddd** triplet opens with:

*Tolling for the searching ones, on their speechless seeking trail*

I used to think that this was merely a nice image but it relates back to verse 4, line 3:

*Tolling for the tongues with no place to bring their thoughts*

which makes it altogether more powerful. I'd never noticed this before but then every time I write about a Dylan song I seem to discover more in it. I feel pity for all those who feel analysis is "reductive" or "beneath them", on the contrary it is an enhancing experience that sends the critic - and if he's a good one, his audience - back to the experience for even more rewarding pleasure.

The triplet in this verse contains the following characters:

- Searchers
- Those denied a voice
- Trail seekers
- Lonely Lovers
- Gentle souls unfairly jailed

It is almost as though these three lines are designed to contain a list of archetypal Dylan characters.

\*\*\*\*\* Harmonica Break of sixteen seconds - the storm lifts \*\*\*\*\*

## VERSE SIX

The verse opens with lovely imagery describing the ending of the storm as experienced by the friends whose comradeship has been strengthened by the experience. The phrase, *Starry-eyed and laughing catches the wonder and hesitancy* one feels after such an experience. (I venture that this is particularly true for city dwellers - but I'd need a country dweller to confirm this for me!)

This feeling of largesse leads to the awesome, all embracing sympathy for everyone who need the Chimes Of Freedom to flash for them:

*Tolling for the aching ones whose wounds cannot be nursed  
For the countless confused accused misused strung-out ones and worse  
And for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe*

This is a magnificent peak of emotion even amongst Dylan's mountain ranges of such and it is all the more effective for the inexorable way the song's design has built to it. Unlike many lines I have previously quoted these do not come across on the page, in performance they are the equal to anything else in the song and, given the delivery, a perfect culmination. Dylan listeners will probably "read" the *nursed/worse/universe* rhymes in that familiar voice anyway!

\*\*\*\*\* A six second harmonica burst brings the song to a very definite conclusion \*\*\*\*\*

*Far between sundown's finish and midnight's broken toll  
We ducked inside the doorway as thunder went crashing  
As majestic bells of bolts struck shadows in the sounds  
Seeming to be the chimes of freedom flashing.  
Flashing for the warriors whose strength is not to fight  
Flashing for the refugees on the unarmed road of flight  
And for each and every underdog soldier in the night  
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.*

*Through the city's melted furnace, unexpectedly we watched  
With faces hidden as the walls were tightening  
As the echo of the weddings bells before the blowing rain  
Dissolved into the bells of the lightning.  
Tolling for the rebel, tolling for the rake,  
Tolling for the luckless the abandoned and forsaken  
Tolling for the outcast, burning constantly at stake,  
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.*

*Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail  
The sky cracked its poems in naked wonder  
That the clinging of the church bells blew far into the breeze  
Leaving only bells of lightning and its thunder.  
Striking for the gentle, striking for the kind,  
Striking for the guardians and protectors of the mind  
And the poet and the painter far behind his rightful time  
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.*

*In the wild cathedral evening the rain unravelled tales  
For the disrobed faceless forms of no position  
Tolling for the tongues with no place to bring their thoughts  
All down in taken-for-granted situations.  
Tolling for the deaf and blind, tolling for the mute  
For the mistreated mateless mother, the mistitled prostitute  
For the misdemeanour outlaw, chased and cheated by pursuit  
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.*

*Even though a cloud's white curtain in a far-off corner flared  
And the hypnotic splattered mist was slowly lifting  
Electric light still struck like arrows, fired but for the ones  
Condemned to drift or else be kept from drifting.  
Tolling for the searching ones, on their speechless seeking trail  
For the lonesome-hearted lovers with too personal a tale  
And for each unharmed gentle soul misplaced inside a jail  
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.*

*Starry-eyed and laughing as I recall when we were caught  
Trapped by no track of hours for they hang suspended  
As we listened one last time and we watched with one last look  
Spellbound and swallowed till the tolling ended.  
Tolling for the aching whose wounds cannot be nursed  
For the countless confused accused misused - strung-out ones and worse  
And for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe  
And we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.*



In July, 1964, Dylan aired some of the songs from his newest album, *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, at the Newport Folk Festival. Coming barely a year after he had been crowned the undisputed King of Protest, his repertoire of bitter love songs and lack of political material came as a shock to many. That weekend, Phil Ochs, with his journalistic songs recounting recent injustices, proved more popular. Cries of "Sell Out!" - now as repetitive and familiar as the seasons - were heard for the first time. Dylan was not only refusing to speak out and thus rejecting protest, but he was denying his own role as spokesman as well.

On the album's back cover, he wrote:

*i know no answers an' no truth  
for absolutely no soul alive  
i will listen t' no one  
who tells me morals  
there are no morals  
an' i dream a lot.*

Several songs repeated this "message":

**Chimes of Freedom** made it clear that he didn't want to be one of the guardians and protectors of the mind.

**My Back Pages** criticized "self ordained professor's tongue" and claimed he feared not that *I'd become my enemy / In the instant that I preach* - raising the possibility of the opposite. The song's chorus called into question the moral certainties of youth: *Ah but I was so much older then / I'm younger than that now*. The song also emphasises the complexity of the issues: *lies that life is black and white and good and bad / I define these terms / quite clear no doubt somehow*.

Lastly the song **It Ain't Me, Babe** - ostensibly directed at a lover but more likely addressed to his audience - directly rejected all expectations.

In 1985 he said of this album: *It seemed like a negation of the past which in no way was true* (**Biograph**).

In interviews following the concert, he gave many reasons for the change. One was the development of his craft. *It's vulgar, the idea that somebody has to say what they want to say in a message type song. It's a stagnation kind of thing. Maybe people are afraid of words...* (Anthony Scaduto, **Bob Dylan: An Intimate Biography**, page 251/2 - hereafter noted as **Scaduto**).

He spoke of the difficulty of writing. Some things couldn't be put into a song, he explained. The result of trying was you ended up saying something different from what you wanted to say. And then you're stuck with it. (In 1985, he told Bill Flanagan that contrary to the accepted belief that his songs always turn out as he intended, sometimes the line doesn't come out right or he may begin writing one thing and end up with something completely different.)

In addition, and part of his recognition at this time that the issues were complex, he said "You've got to respect other people's right to also have a message themselves" (**Bob Dylan: A Retrospective**, edited by **Craig McGregor**, 1972 edition, page 133 - hereafter noted as **Retrospective**).

Another reason was *Me*. *I don't want to write for people any more. You know, be a spokesman. While I once wrote about Emmett Till in the first person, pretending I was him ... From now on, I want to write from inside me...* (**Retrospective**, page 42).

But if he wished to avoid responsibility by being free from the role of spokesman, writing love songs wasn't the answer. These songs were as much for people, if not more so, as the protest songs.

As more and more people criticized and the criticism itself became extreme, not surprisingly he became openly antagonistic. He began making contentious statements, full of contempt for those who wanted to foist a strait-jacket on him:

*Message songs ... are a drag. It's only college newspaper editors and single girls under 14 that could possibly have time for them.* (**Retrospective**, page 132)

*It's pointless to dedicate yourself to the cause ... to say "cause of peace" is just like saying "hunk of butter". I mean, how can you listen to anybody who wants you to believe he's dedicated to the hunk and not to the butter?* (**Retrospective**, page 137).

and - most damning of all:

*How can I possibly be the voice of their generation? I'm not their generation. (Retrospective, page 95).*

People began to question his former stance. He was completely open about his motives - warts and all - as well as contradictions and ambiguities.

*I didn't go into folk music to make any money but because it was easy. You could be by yourself. You didn't need anybody. All you needed was a guitar." Yet, "If somebody was going to give me \$300 for doing a certain thing, it wouldn't be too hard to do that thing. My ideals aren't that important to me, what you might call ideals. I didn't really care ... (Scaduto, page 182-3).*

He admitted in regard to writing topical songs ..some of that was jumping into the scene to be heard and a lot of it was just because I didn't see anybody else doing that kind of thing ... (Retrospective, page 47).

He also said at the end of 1963, *I needed bread, and I had to scuffle. That's all. But I don't have to scuffle anymore. I can do it my way now. (Scaduto, page 182-3).*

At one point he said he'd never been interested in politics, so you couldn't say he'd lost interest. But this next statement raised a different aspect:

*All I can say is politics is not my thing at all. I can't see myself on a platform talking about how to help people. Because I would get myself killed if I really tried to help anybody. I mean if somebody really had something to say to help somebody out, just bluntly say the truth, well obviously they're gonna be done away with. They're gonna be killed.*

These two strands - the desire to make it and feeling threatened if he spoke out - combined in this next quote: *I had to hold a lot of things back before. That's why I was doing other kinds of writing, because I could never get away with it in a song, people would never understand, they would have killed me. I would have been dead, they would have chased me off the stage, I would have been a total failure. I held it back because I had to survive, I had to make it back then, I couldn't go too far out. (Scaduto, page 182-3).*

It is interesting he equates failure with death. Such statements led people to assume his political disaffection was due to fears for personal safety after Kennedy's assassination. Dylan denied this. *It didn't knock the wind out of me. Of course I felt as rotten as anyone else. But if I was more sensitive about it ... I would have written a song about it, wouldn't I? The whole thing about my reactions to the assassination is overplayed. (Scaduto, page 188).<sup>1</sup>*

Others saw his disaffection as foresight. He had simply seen earlier than most that the kids would soon reject all leaders, including their own leaders - on both sides of the barricades - would come to be seen as part of the problem. Janet Maslin wrote *What was astonishing was that he seemed to know, unerringly, which way that audience was headed. (Rolling Stone Illustrated History, 1981 Edition, page 223).*

A further explanation for his change could also be due to prophecy, but may have simply been due to his appreciation (seen as early as **Only A Pawn In Their Game**) that the issues were more complex than simple advertising slogans could encompass.

There were two main issues in the early sixties:

- 1) "ban the bomb" or nuclear disarmament which became a general anti war movement with America's increasing involvement in Vietnam; and
- 2) the civil rights movement, which began as non-violent protest under the leadership of Martin Luther King and the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), which advocated integration.

The civil rights movement was in fact two movements. It changed after the Watts riots in 1965 and other violent ghetto uprisings. Stokely Carmichael, King's former group SNCLC (Southern National Christian Leadership Conference) and CORE (Congress for Racial Equality) all began to support Black Power or

<sup>1</sup>(He did in fact write several prose poems about the assassination. The Margolis and Mass manuscripts contain two pages about the tragedy, including foreign press conspiracy theories, the controversy concerning *Life* magazine's photos of Mrs Kennedy on the car's trunk just after the shots, and his own empathy with Oswald as he wonders if he'd ever kill a President - the same sentiments he tried to express at the Tom Paine Award dinner.)

separatism. Malcolm X of the Black Muslims (a separatist Mohammedan religious group) left the movement and was killed in 1965 by 3 blacks. In 1965, Carmichael was replaced by Rap Brown, an anti-white racist. By the end of the year, the Black Panthers were formed in Oakland. They advocated armed revolution in order to form a separate black state within America. (Information from *Truman to Carter: A Post-War History of the USA* by Peter J Mooney & Colin Brown.)

The Panthers viewed Dylan with increasing suspicion. His Jewishness became an issue in the early 1970s when they attacked him for being a Zionist. They considered the Israeli government's oppression of the Palestinians as akin to their own at the hands of White America.

The anti-war movement also defied simplicity. Bob Sarin (*Turn It Up I Can't Hear The Lyrics*) felt those involved in the ban the bomb movement in the 1950s turned their attention to civil rights in 1963. Although he doesn't extend this hypothesis, logically it would require that, when the Black Panthers excluded whites from their activities, the whites returned to the anti-war movement. (This would certainly be convenient since by this time the war increasingly and directly affected them.)

But this analysis is faulty, because the war was equally an issue with the blacks. They were the first to be drafted and "a disproportionate number of blacks (few had the advantage of college deferment) were being drafted to Vietnam and many felt no Viet Cong ever called them "nigger"" (*Truman to Carter: A Post-War History of the USA* page 140). Incidentally, the identical sentiment was expressed by Paul Robeson in the 1930s about Russians.

Martin Luther King agreed with this view and incorporated the war into his policies. He linked blacks' general oppression - their lack of job and training (including college education) opportunities, their expendability for Vietnam - with economic conditions. They lacked power because they were poor; they remained poor (and oppressed) because they lacked power.

(Interestingly, Dylan also felt this. "Ah, I don't love black or green or white or blue or whatever happens to be the color of different people. But in a search for truth you find different elements that happen to be involved with how certain people treat other people - economically, socially or personally." (Randy Anderson interview, Minnesota Daily, 12 February 1978.))

Thus, one aspect of Dylan's acclaimed prophetic ability stems from a simple awareness that things aren't simplistic dichotomies. Races themselves are not homogenous groupings. There are differences within each race as seen today in America where middle-class blacks receiving benefits from affirmative action policies have nothing in common with (and share white prejudices against) lower class blacks who remain in the ghettos. In other words they identify with those they wish to emulate, if only in material terms.

Dave Harker criticized Dylan for private solutions which "in the face of the corporate state" is no solution at all. But Richard Farina recognized, despite large issues and world affairs, "the plight of the individual must be considered..." (*A Dylan Companion*, page 85). Harker agreed to some extent. He stated that, even in love songs, as long as Dylan told the truth, his lyrics still mattered.

Such a view assumes songs are measured against lyrical realism. As long as Dylan writes "true" feelings, as opposed to sentimentality, he is valid.

This is linked to Antonio Gramsci's concept hegemony - the process whereby capitalism incorporates all dissent in order to continue. David Pichaske (*A Generation In Motion*) has identified three ways it does this:

### 1) the rub out.

Dylan's fans at the time saw the 1966 cycle crash as an FBI plot. When it was reported that the back wheel had locked, those in the underground believed J Edgar Hoover had fixed the bike. While this now appears as conspiracy theorists gone mad, there is ample evidence since the Freedom Of Information Act of just such cloak and dagger manipulations, plots, discrediting and even murder conducted by the FBI.

In addition in 1965, an Esquire cover for the college issue showed 4 student heroes: Kennedy, Malcolm X, Che Guevara and Bob Dylan. The first three were dead - the first two considered victims of an FBI conspiracy and the third was factually murdered by the CIA, members of which gloated over the bullet-ridden body on the evening TV news. Is it so far-fetched to have considered Dylan threatened by the State's henchmen? While abroad on his 1966 tour, journalists asked him about America's foreign policy.

Lastly the far right considered Dylan and his first producer - and the man who had signed him to Columbia -

as, respectively, "the crimson trou" and "an extreme leftist". Hammond was closely associated with the NAACP and was responsible for CBS- Columbia's jazz catalogue. They believed that both would subvert American youth, especially as Dylan and the Beatles (foreigners no less) were agents of communist subversion. (These views were expressed by Gary Allen, a John Birch Society strategist in *American Opinion* which was published as late as February, 1969!

## 2) the buy out

Cries of "Sell Out" equated commercial success with conformity. Even those who rated Dylan as a poet felt he was restricted by contractual obligations.

But there are problems with this. Had Dylan "sold out" when he got the recording contract? If so, how do the left explain his protest songs?

Scaduto believed Dylan shouldn't have been accused of "sell out" in 1963 when **John Birch** was kept off the album and the Ed Sullivan show as, Dylan wasn't earning enough to insist on album content. He argues that by 1965, however, his earning power was so substantial that he could dictate terms. This isn't accurate. His earnings up to October 1965 were still low enough to earn him an ASCAP Award, and, even today, no artist owns his product, and thus cannot control it. Dylan has said on several occasions that it is not up to him what goes on or off an album, or, indeed, what material is released. The entire **Bootleg Series** didn't need his permission or even acquiescence to be released.

What might pertain is, being a low earner at the time, Dylan, like his student audience, was outside the economic system and so could see it clearer and questions of "buy out" did not arise.

## 3) Dilution

This is the most pervasive and therefore hidden form of hegemony. This includes imitation, repetition and parody. All dilute the forcefulness of the original "message".

Dylan said of the new music of the 1980s: *It's everywhere. You can't turn it off.* The result is it numbs people; soon they don't even hear it anymore.

This of course includes the marketing of dissent where a winning formula will be repeated so often that the original message or form becomes a parody of itself. Therefore even original artists such as Dylan are rendered impotent through constant repetition and poor imitations. These poor imitations can come to include the original artist himself. It has been said (and is now a truism) that *rock stars begin by imitating someone else and end up imitating themselves*". (*Esquire Magazine*, 1990, date and author unknown.)

Dylan no doubt is aware of these dangers. It is note-worthy that for some time now concert-goers have found his cover versions of other people's songs and his unearthing of traditional ballads the most exciting and interesting part of his concerts. I don't believe this is due to the fact that people who attend many shows consequently tire of hearing **Like A Rolling Stone** for the umpteenth time. It is more likely to be due to Dylan himself feeling energized and enlivened by songs other than his own.

This form of hegemony is also one of the reasons Dylan has objected to lines from his songs being taken out of context and used for advertisements. He has said the ads (for whatever product) were not why he wrote the songs in the first place. Such extractions and trivializations would soon reverberate back and weaken the original songs.

We can easily illustrate Pichaske's 3 forms of hegemony with Elvis. Many felt he was emasculated when he went to RCA (the buy out), inducted into the army (if a war had been on, this would constitute the rub out) and/or all those Hollywood movies (dilution on a major scale!).

Dylan has always been aware of hegemony, "...songs don't change the world" he had said. And he's right, William Zantinger was sentenced to nine months for "unfair and deceptive trade practices" in 1991, compared with six months for killing Hattie Carroll in 1963 (see *The Telegraph* 42).

Recent studies have shown that sixties folksingers acted as cheerleaders. They didn't win converts but reinforced the political and philosophical views already held. Dylan's Newport appearance and disavowals of protest after was a slap in the collective face which saw protest as a badge of identity and an expression of solidarity. Folk music was a way to keep the faith and Dylan, the lead cheerleader, was breaking rank. (See Louis Contar's **Bob Dylan and the Protest Movement of the 1960s** in *Conclusions on the Wall* edited by

Elizabeth M Thomson).

It was the older generation at Newport who were particularly upset. Pete Seeger had an intense emotional involvement and personal stake in Dylan as a protest singer. He had been black-listed from TV and Radio due to McCarthy's witch-hunt. Imagine then the delight when Dylan expressed similar views and got them not just on the radio but got them in the charts no less! (Peter, Paul & Mary's **Blowin' In The Wind** reached number 2.) Dylan's popularity meant acceptability at last. And just at this apex he decides to abandon protest in order to study his own psyche!

As usual Dylan understood. *All those labour people, rich suburban cats telling their kids not to buy Bob Dylan records. All they want is songs from the '30s, union hate songs, "Which Side Are You On? That's such a waste of time. I mean, which side can you be on?"* (Scaduto, page 251/2).

Lilian Roxon put the entire controversy down to envy. It was Dylan's success, she felt, rather than concerns about propagating working class art and issues that led to the attacks. And if they were concerned about giving these issues a platform, it was due to Dylan's popularity that (1) they could now express themselves and (2) they'd be heard by a much larger audience.

In 1965, his electric guitar led to cries of "Sell Out!", too. Israel Young was foremost in the attack. His letter to **Sing Out!** accused Dylan of being a commercial artist, ready to go in any direction that was popular. (The fact Dylan left folk at the height of its popularity - a popularity due solely to him - argues against this of course.) But Young's audience for his claim illustrates the hegemonist forces at work. He declares that Dylan would settle for the popularity of Top 40 Radio Charts, and then - incredulously, pompously and naively - he points out that these are the same charts the State Department sends to entertain the troops!

Too right. They were Dylan's audience too. The average age of the troops in Vietnam, as Paul Hardcastle's single reiterated, was 19. Michael Herr's **Dispatches** described Vietnam as "America's first rock'n'roll war".

A large proportion of those in "Nam" were among the "converted" by the way; they too objected to America's involvement in the war but faced with the alternatives of jail or giving up their country (they had no way of knowing that years later Carter would give an amnesty to those who had left the country) went into the forces hoping to just keep their heads down for the 13 month duty in Nam.

But as Dylan's 1990 concert at West Point on the eve of the Gulf War (at which he sang several anti war songs) illustrate, if you want to spread the word, you have to reach the non-converted.

In 1970 Keith Richards exposed his own innocence when he said *We found out, and it wasn't for years that we did, that all the bread we made for Decca was going into making little black boxes that go into American Air Force bombers to bomb fucking North Vietnam. They took the bread we made for them and put it into the radar section of their business. When we found that out, it blew our minds.* (**Rolling Stone Interviews**, Volume II, editor Ben Fong-Torres, Warner Brothers, New York, 1973).

The link between record production and the military is communications technology. The arms race is responsible for constant new developments in the music industry. Peter Williams explains: *Audio is a fairly obscure back-water of electronics. When people do go out to design a new chip they're not thinking how many recording studios can we sell it to. They're thinking how many missiles can we stick this in. Most electronic equipment is highly military.* (Peter Williams, **Sound Engineer**, July 1985, page 32.)

Dylan, well aware of such hegemonist complications, justified his leaving protest with this insightful, devastating and somewhat fateful comment: *...nobody in power has to worry about anybody from the outside...criticizing their society. Because he is on the outside, he's not in it anyway, and he's not gonna make a dent. You can't go around criticizing something you're not a part of and hope to make it better...I'm not gonna make a dent or anything, so why be a part of it by even trying to criticize it? That's a waste of time. The kids know that.* (Scaduto, page 205.)

But he was part of the music industry and A J Weberman pressed Dylan to speak out about that. *What you gotta do is write songs like what went down 30 years ago in the fuckin' escapist music industry....* If Dylan said something about that, Weberman argued, people would *begin to think and maybe they'll stop buying your records. Your later records, you know.* (A J Weberman, **The Historic Confrontation**, printed in **Isis** 14/15 and 16/17. This particular reference is in **Isis** 16/17, pages 46-47.)

Although I haven't a clue what Weberman is specifically referring to, the record industry is, and always has been, ultra-conservative. Therefore it is only a superficial contradiction when their promotion campaigns

endorse "storm the barricades" rhetoric and the community born of such slogans. (CBS had an ad campaign in the late '60s based on "Music For The Revolution". And their advert in the Isle of Wight programme stated "The revolutionaries are on CBS".)

This is no more clandestine than denim-clad millionaire pop-stars accounting the plight of the poor or expressing social reality far removed from their own. (Musicians are in fact petty-bourgeoisie craft workers.)

An important point to keep in mind is that for rock artists, the music is the creative development and expression of their personality, which is, therefore, individualistic. This personal purpose transforms into collective, common experience as the star evokes a community feel at his concerts. Simultaneously the music also expresses the personal experience of each listener. Thus the music is subjected to both individual and and collective purposes.

These tendencies - the industry's ability to adopt and the contradictions created for the pop star - are clear in the following analysis: *the establishment is made of rubber - it adopts by spreading out, by stretching a little more and swallowing all the crazy excesses and deviations... and as soon as he gets a bit of the action, the angry young man calms down and pays lip service to the revolution, a revolution of music, rage and characteristic nothingness.* (Ed Leimbacher, **Ramparts**, January 1970, page 14.)

Dylan recognised all this and has in fact commented on the industry. Contrasting charity events like Live Aid with the student activism of the '60s <sup>2</sup> Dylan said that the difference was that in the '60s it was dangerous to do something; people would try to stop the show. Now, people didn't take offence. (**New Musical Express's** Doc Watson described Live Aid as "corporate pop turned corporate charity".)

Musically, *it was tough getting heard, it was radical* in the 50's and 60's. The rock'n'roll artist was the side show. *Now it's the main event.* The result of the acceptance was damaging to the music. *The corporate world when they figured out what it was and how to use it, they snuffed the breath out of it...* (**Biograph**). And *no one's telling the kids anything anymore; the kids are just getting consumer products that aren't doing them any good* (**Dylan's Dilemma; Rolling Stone**, 1985, by David Fricke, date and issue number unknown).

In 1974, he had spoken at length about *big business moving in on the music*. The result was that concerts became extravaganzas with an emphasis on *bigger, louder bangs*, i.e. extremes in sound amplifications and light shows. The music got lost.

In 1979, commenting on complaints about his new arrangements of songs on the tour the year before, Dylan said *it sort of makes me feel like the underdog. That fits me better anyway. I don't like being everybody's favourite. It makes you wonder if you're really saying anything at all.* (Robert Hilburn, **Calendar Pop Music**, 18/11/79.)

Greil Marcus wrote in 1975: *If you get what you have to say across to a mass audience, that means what you have to say is not deep enough, or strong enough to really matter.* (**Mystery Train**, page 132.)

The measures used to judge rock music are communication, creativity and common experience - all are born of individualism. Through this the artist hopes to avoid the constraints of the business. As long as they assert themselves against commercial pressure and are successful, they achieve self realisation and counter assembly-line production restrictions. Steve Rawlings said: *If you can creep into that big, shitty business and sell a million on your terms, that's what's important.* (**New Musical Express**, 21/4/84.)

(Note the difference from earlier opinions that equated commercial success with conformity. Also it is interesting that when anti-establishment dissent had become entrenched, any move from that then constituted a provocative breach. Thus in 1979 when Dylan "converted" to Christianity his office felt it necessary to issue a statement saying he was still liberal politically.)

Dylan on modern music: *There is so much mediocrity going on, every time someone really good comes along it's like you can't be too good 'cause you're looked at, you stand out. People that stand out in an individual kind of way, they don't fit into the system because they don't sell, they don't keep system commodities going...* (**Pulse, Juke Magazine**, 1/3/86; reprinted **Rolling Thunder Supplement 2**).

<sup>2</sup> In her introductory speech, Joan Baez claimed the audience at Live Aid were a continuation of the Woodstock generation - a dubious claim considering the motives of each event. Surely this contrast is the reverse of Tony Parsons' belief that the '60s were a time of idealism while, since then, music stars and fans are hedonistic. Woodstock could be seen as an example of both: the desire to demonstrate a different way of life - if only for 3 days - and protest the war combined with free love, freely available drugs etc - many aspects having less to do with idealism than ego-centric pleasure.



Even more disturbing is the point Dylan made about Elvis: *When I first heard Elvis' voice I just knew that I wasn't going to work for anybody and nobody was gonna be my boss. Hearing him for the first time was like busting out of jail.* (US Magazine, page 231, *Oh No! Not Another Bob Dylan Book*, Patrick Humphries and John Bauldie.)

No wonder the music of the '50s was considered so dangerous! What would capitalism do without willing workers?

But Dylan, as a musician, and, therefore, member of the petty bourgeoisie, would never advocate revolution. He and other rock musicians have, as we have seen, an individual perspective that precludes such social action.

Dave Harker's lyrical realism - i.e. as long as Dylan expressed true emotions, he was valid - is discounted by Chappell's point that *to Dylan there is no existential difference between private and public commitments.* (Maurice Chappell, *The Blessing Of The Damned*, page 115, *A Dylan Companion*, edited Elizabeth Thompson and David Gutman.) He gives several examples:

In **Chimes of Freedom** he was the mouthpiece for universal suffering -

*tolling for the aching ones whose wounds cannot be nursed  
For the countless confused, accused, misused, strung out ones an' worse  
An' for every hung up person in the whole wide universe...*

In **When The Ship Comes In** he was the mouthpiece for universal liberation.

In **A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall** he was speaking about universal destruction.

**To Ramona** - on the controversial 4th album - is a song expressing individual choice beyond self-, or socially imposed, limitations.

*People talk about trying to change society. All I know is that so long as people stay so concerned about protecting their status, and protecting what they have, ain't nothing going to be done* (**Retrospective**, page 61).

This perfectly summarizes the individualistic approach: people must change themselves first; societal changes will naturally follow. Thus we read: *... what's wrong goes much deeper than the bomb. What's wrong is how few people are free ... I know there're some people terrified of the bomb, but there are other people terrified to be seen carrying a modern screen magazine* (**Retrospective**, page 107).

And lastly he advises *I can't tell them how to change things, because there's only one way to change things and that's to cut yourself off from the chains....* These chains are based, like Marx's theories, on material factors:

- 1) what they do i.e. their jobs. *They got their jobs to keep* (**Retrospective**, page 61).
- 2) what they own i.e. their possessions. See quote above.
- 3) how they are perceived by others i.e. their status which is linked, as is (2), to ownership and includes competition, and also linked to (3) and including Marx's theory of alienation (which is itself the result of the first three)
- 4) *...people wanting to be accepted, people not wanting to be alone. But ... what is to be done? I've been alone sometimes in front of 3000 people.* He poignantly added *I was alone that night" - the night of the Civil Liberties Tom Paine award dinner.* (**Retrospective**, page 60).

These 1964 "chains" became a myth in 1985. (Incidentally, this is just one example of his consistency, despite all his fast changes.) When speaking of his childhood, Dylan said that early rock'n'roll pulled people out of the "myth". I assume he's referring to the American Dream whereby people either are rich or hoping to become rich. The music offered escape. As noted before, being a student at the time he is speaking of he is outside the economic system and, therefore, able (as later were his audience in the early '60s) to see clearly



the contradictions capitalism throws up, to reject it and then commit himself (themselves) to individuality instead of an impersonal, cog-in-the-wheel, social security (soon to be draft card) numbered structure.

Dylan recognized early that topical song writing and folk had simply become another community that the record companies could exploit for profit. It, too, had become one of those chains that prevented change.

In 1985 he was distressed that people no longer even wanted to be pulled out of the myth. They liked where they were. He linked this acceptance of the new music which, like Pichaske's dilution, was projected everywhere. From shopping centre malls where muzak was continually piped, to sitting in a traffic jam forced to hear the radios from surrounding cars. Every film and TV show had a soundtrack. It was everywhere; you couldn't get away from it. You couldn't turn it off. Non-stop sound that you became so anathematized to that you ceased to hear it.

Dylan is not alone in his belief that people must change themselves first. The Beatles and the Rolling Stones, too, considered the individual as the origin of society's problems. Therefore, as with Dylan, people must change their consciousness first. We see this in the Beatles' **Revolution** and the Stones' **Street Fightin' Man**:

**Revolution** saw the world from the individual's point of view and, therefore, rejected student activism. Interestingly Lennon changed the lyrics for the White Album. The original *don't you know that you can count me out* became *out/in*. He left it to the listener to choose which version he preferred. Lennon admitted *I put in both because I wasn't sure*.

Likewise the Stones' **Street Fightin' Man** declared *singing in a rock'n'roll band* was an alternative to activism. The song was written as Mick Jagger had attempted to join the demonstration against American involvement in Vietnam outside the American Embassy. Once recognized, *he fled, realizing bitterly that his fame and wealth precluded him from the revolution...* (Tony Sanchez, **Up and Down With The Rolling Stones**, Signet, New York, 1980, pages 127-8).

This is a clear example of the rock star giving expression to a social reality from which he is excluded. The song presents the only course of action open to him, i.e. being in a rock band. Therefore, the song's chorus that the time is not ripe for street fighting becomes an attempt to equalize the situation, to justify his inability to take part. The result is the same as the Beatles' song: i.e. that rock music was the real instrument of revolution. (But if the world's problems are the result of the individual's problems, this would explain the over-estimation of music's social possibilities.)

Successful rock artists become part of capitalism's social hierarchy and genuinely don't see any boundaries other than their own consciousness. Thus Paul McCartney sincerely asked *Why can't we be communists? We're the number one capitalists*. (Miles, **The Beatles In Their Own Words**, page 62.)

Jon Landau squared the circle by claiming *The Stones may not be sure where their heads are, but their hearts are out in the streets* (**Daily World**, 22 February, 1969, **Rock'n'Roll Radical?**). In other words as long as the Stones produced powerful, direct music they fulfilled what the activists wanted from rock. But Simon Frith has devastatingly (and I fear accurately) contradicted this view:

*In fact rock, rather than being an example of how freedom can be achieved within the capitalist structure, is an example of how capitalism can ... deceive those whom it oppresses... So effective has the rock industry been in encouraging the spirit of optimistic youth take-over that rock's truly hard political edge, its constant exploration of the varieties of youthful frustration, has been ignored and softened.* (S Frith, **The Sociology Of Rock**, page 200.)

## NOTE

I referred earlier to Tony Parsons' diatribe on Channel 4's **Without Walls** (4/5/93 9 p.m.). His thesis was that in the 1960s, music was important to people's lives and artists/fans were idealistic as opposed to today's hedonistic emphasis on video games and dance music. He mentioned Dylan's **The Times They Are A-Changin** and boldly stated *People thought songs could change the world*. Well, we've seen that Dylan didn't believe this then, now or ever.

Secondly, if a second generation American fan were speaking, the example would be John Lennon's **Imagine** - a song not written until 1971 by the way - rather than Dylan's **Times**.

Thirdly, on *Right To Reply* the following Saturday, he cited Mick Jagger's demonstrating in Grosvenor Square as evidence for his thesis, which we have seen Jagger was in fact unable to do. To even attempt it was naive on Jagger's part, as was the Stones' unawareness of the connection between the record and defence industries.

Parsons' thesis is counter-acted by people under 40 (himself included) not only listening to Dylan, Stones, Beatles but going even further back to purchase box sets by Hank Williams and Robert Johnson (both of which sold well).

Therefore could it not be argued that dates are less important than the quality of the music? (Just as today people have expressed concern that the industry is emphasizing the form the music appears in (CD, cassette, mini-disc, etc) rather than the music itself.)

Further points to consider:

- 1) Surely Elvis Costello's *Shipbuilding* (a song condemning Thatcher) is not only idealistic, but something Dylan's never done, i.e. written a song criticizing one particular party. Billy Bragg is also relevant here.
- 2) Second generation fans are very enthusiastic about Dylan's acoustic resurrections of long-gone traditional folk songs. Whether idealistic or hedonistic, there's a lot to be said for preserving heritage.
- 3) In conclusion I wondered why Parsons was so concerned about idealism? As I've touched on here, it is debatable how idealistic artists and fans were in the '60s. For instance, drug-taking caused people to notoriously study their navels and no longer look outward toward the world at large.

## PART 2

It is impossible to know what Dylan truly believes. *How can they possibly know what I believe?* (page 137 *Retrospective*) and *People think they know me from my songs. But my repertoire of songs is so wide ranging that you'd have to be a madman to figure out the characteristics of the person who wrote all those songs...* (Joe Smith, *Off The Record*, 1989).<sup>3</sup>

At the time of Live Aid he commented that "liberal humanist" was "such a bullshit term" (*Rolling Stone*, 21/6/84, page 17). It was well known in the late '60s he thought Joan Baez was naive to believe the American prisoners of war paraded for her benefit by the North Vietnamese meant all prisoners of war were being well treated. (Just as the Red Cross Observers were taken in by the Nazis' model concentration camp, Theresienstadt.)

According to Michael McClure his politics were "first strike capability politics" (page 3 of *Homer, the slut #8*, review of Ginsberg biography by Miles). According to his own statements he relies (as we saw above) on individual solutions. *I always thought that one man, the lone balladeer with the guitar, could blow an entire army off the stage if he knew what he was doing...* (*Biograph*, 1985).<sup>4</sup>

Without definite answers, people made assumptions about his beliefs. *Bob Dylan, it has been said, was the man most responsible for ending the Vietnam War.* (*Rolling Stone*, # 592, 29/11/90). John Fogerty argued *Did the idealism of the '60s have any impact? Hey, we got rid of Nixon and the war's over! If you really want to hang it on one guy, you could say that Bob Dylan ended the war and got Nixon kicked out. Bob Dylan turned a lot of heads by writing politically....He certainly turned John Lennon's head. He turned my head.* (page 90, *Oh No Not Another Bob Dylan Book*, Patrick Humphries and John Bauldie.)

Such claims are belied by Dylan's own comments. In 1985 Bill Flanagan told him:

*It's funny. When I was growing up people would say "Bob Dylan, oh, he writes a lot of songs against the Vietnam war" and I have all those albums and I'd always say ..*

*Which ones?* Dylan laughed.

<sup>3</sup> Yet in 1990 he completely reversed this. *People can learn everything about me through my songs, if they know where to look. They can juxtapose them with certain other songs and draw a clear picture.* (*USA Today*, 14/9/90, Edna Gundersen) That's right, Bob, keep 'em guessing!

<sup>4</sup> Patty Smith, another musician, also felt an individualistic solution. *I look at him and I don't see a guy giving leaflets, holding a banner. I see a machine gun.* (*The Telegraph* 32)

*Right, 'cause the songs they cite - like **Hard Rain & Blowin In The Wind** - all pre-dated Vietnam. (Bill Flanagan, **Written In My Soul**, page 104.)*

It may not even matter what Dylan's actual beliefs are. His songs are appropriated by diverse people and groups. Dylan recognized this: *I can't help what people do with my songs* (**Playboy**, 1978). He knew people were going to do whatever anyway, despite his actions or statements to the contrary. Such appropriations still stick in his throat though. When Toby Creswell commented *..you have politicians associating themselves with rock'n'roll songs*, Dylan replied *Absurd, isn't it. The rock'n'roll songs they're quoting from don't deserve to be quoted from like that.* (**Rolling Stone Australia**, # 394, 16/1/86.)

One such was John Lennon's **Give Peace A Chance** which was sung at the Young Conservatives conference. Of course Lennon, who not only identified with the working class but also with the Irish (he even wrote a pro-IRA song) would have disapproved. As did Bryan Adams when his song **Everything I Do I Do It For You** was appropriated by ex-Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, David Duke, during his campaign for Governor of Louisiana. (Information from Channel 4's **Box Office**, 15/11/91.)

Dylan neatly summarizes this phenomenon. *It's like Lyndon Johnson saying **We Shall Overcome** to a nationwide audience, ridiculous...* (Yet, according to Ralph Abernathy, this speech drew a tear from Martin Luther King.) *..There's an old saying "If you want to defeat your enemy, sing his song" and that's pretty much still true..* (**Biograph**).

Incidentally Dylan saw this as yet another benefit of the music of the '50s. *You couldn't do that with the early stuff, Little Richard and Chuck Berry - what politician is going to quote Chuck Berry?...It was outside then.* (**Rolling Stone Australia**, # 394, 16/1/86, Toby Creswell.)

Dylan also knows *fans are consumers* and just as it's impossible to know him from his lyrics, so it is impossible to know what his fans want. After all they are not a homogenous group. Fans select artists and aspects of one artist's work they wish to emphasize.

Thus South African blacks tend to concentrate on Jim Reeves' Christianity rather than the fact that he came from the southern states of America and held the predominant discriminatory views of whites in that locale. Jerry Garcia, when asked if Republicans could like the Grateful Dead, said *What we do is as American as lynch mobs.* (**Rolling Stone**, # 566, 30/11/89.)

The classic comment relating to Dylan fans appeared in a letter to **The Telegraph** (# 32) from Paul Bryant: *For years I've assumed no-one could be a Dylan fan without sharing a certain left of centre view. But maybe that's a little naive. Maybe you can love Bob Dylan and pitbull terrier fighting.* (In the **Pit Bull News** magazine, one dog was named Dylan and another Sarah which led to his letter.) *Maybe you can vote for Reagan or Bush or Thatcher, and still think Dylan is the one great figure of modern music. Maybe you can hear the words but not notice the meanings...Can it be that at Dylan concerts for years dedicated CNDers have been unwittingly sitting next to fundamentalists and survivalists, and animal rights campaigners have been one row behind dog fight or hare coursing enthusiasts? All listening to Bob singing that there is no neutral ground. I surely hope not.*

Dylan more than most elicits divergent views. Perhaps his music allows for different responses as he himself too endorses different positions. Thus while Clinton Heylin feels *The relevance of appropriated chic liberal lip service politics to Dylan escapes me* (**Rolling Thunder Supplement 21**), Dylan's office felt his assumed political beliefs were very important. During his religious "Conversion", with its political association with the moral majority, as ticket sales for his tour were sluggish, they issued a statement saying he was still a liberal.

So while Dylan knows *fans are consumers and the company tries to please the consumers* he also felt this *can rule your life. If the fan don't like you, he becomes somebody else's fan...I'm not gonna live or die behind that. I'm not selling breakfast cereal or razor blades or whatever.* (**Biograph**)

Despite this statement he is not averse to stoking the fires himself occasionally. Thus, while he may decry political appropriations as above in the LBJ quote, that statement alone led to a half hour radio show playing his music. Therefore even his outrage can be good for business. (Just as in 1963 when he was banned from singing **John Birch Society Paranoid Blues** on the Ed Sullivan Show, he subsequently introduced the song at concerts for a year after as *the song they wouldn't let me sing on TV* (**Bootleg Series** Booklet, John Bauldie, page 20). During his "country phase" he appeared at the Guthrie Benefit and released the **George Jackson** single. During the Gulf War he sang **Masters Of War** both at the Grammy Awards ceremony and at his concert at West Point.

Thus, just as "What's good for gay is good for America" and "You want revolution - we'll give you revolution", so Dylan might as well play them at their own game and advertise himself!

In addition just as the fans are individuals taking what they want from Dylan, so the issues themselves, as he recognized in 1964, are not simplistic questions and answers. Beginning with the terminology, Dylan has continually emphasized the complexities involved (which incidentally may account for his emphasis on individual, particular solutions).

"Pacifism, rightism, leftism, militarism, republicanism ... I don't think people know what they're talking about when they use all those words." (Bill Flanagan, *Written In My Soul*, page 103.)

And on the *Omnibus* programme in October, 1986, he expanded this idea. *Where does this word come from, "politics"? Is this a Greek word or what? What does it actually mean? Everybody uses it all the time. I don't know what the fuck it means. Left, right, rebel. Some people are rebels. Let's see. Afghanistan are rebels, but they're ok. Their rebels are alright. But in El Salvador the rebels are the bad guys. Nicaragua the rebels are the good guys. If you listen to that stuff you go crazy. You don't even know who you are anymore. It don't make sense to me. I don't see good guy, bad guy. It's that Dave Mason song, "There ain't no good guy, there ain't no bad guy, there's only you and me and we just disagree." True or what? (The Telegraph 30, page 39, Chris Sykes.)*

Or as Bob Dylan - who always said it best - said:

*You're right from your side and I'm right from mine  
We're both just one too many mornings  
And a thousand miles behind."*

(One Too Many Mornings)

*We always did feel the same  
We just saw it from a different point of view"*

(Tangled Up In Blue)





## APPENDIX

I wrote the above piece before receiving *The Telegraph* 45 which included two letters which expressed some distress about Dylan's appearance at Clinton's Inauguration. The various concerts to celebrate the Inauguration are, of course, a blatant illustration of hegemony.

This is most likely due to Clinton's age, 46, and the fact that after 30 to 40 years of rock'n'roll - it is now part of the cultural mainstream. I'm 42 and my father (in his 70s) likes Elvis Presley now. (After all Elvis was good to his mother.) *Rolling Stone* magazine now accepts ads for the armed forces, something they would obviously never have done when the war in Nam was killing off their readership. Similarly the forces would not have been willing to pay advertisement revenue to a paper critical of their entire purpose. *Rolling Stone* is now a major and accepted publishing and commercial venture, little more than a consumers' guide to music. They stopped being an "underground" magazine in 1973.

While I do not wish to upset anyone who has cherished beliefs (on either side of the political spectrum), I offer the ideas in my article and this appendix for consideration. Anyone and everyone is free to disagree, ignore, or - plainly - not read.

As I've said in my piece, it is impossible to know Dylan's beliefs, but one aspect that seems consistent is an abiding interest in - those geographical references throughout his songs - and love of America. After all, *Like many great American artists his principal subject has perhaps been America itself, its teeming diversity ('packed with music of every kind'), its search, like his own, for identity. It has proved a life-long quest. As Ginsberg put it "He was always a hard-working guy". (Observer Profile, 4/2/90)*

I didn't find it even surprising that Dylan had turned up for the Clinton event. Didn't everyone? What I knew though was that Dylan would be the one artist whose motives for turning up would be questioned and criticized. (If he had been invited and not turned up, he would of course have been equally criticized - only by a different set of people.) Dylan would be flattered at being invited. He is an American, a patriotic American. He has stated several times that he would not live anywhere else. He has a reputation of feeling easier with American audiences, though there is evidence that he's finally warming to this country. (He has long known his best fans are here.)

He has said he would like to meet Reagan (a Republican) so by turning up at the Inauguration of a Democrat he is keeping it even. He has said he does not support any political party. His comment that McGovern was *just another guy running for President* is hardly surprising. After all, being Bob Dylan, he would not be impressed by a guy running for a 4 year office (and that's if the guy wins). But at the same time he met Carter who was only a candidate at the time (1976) and then was annoyed that Carter, after quoting from his songs during the campaign, did not invite him to the White House on his election. He was reported reading a biography of Ulysses S Grant not so long ago, and, no doubt, has read other histories and biographies of major American figures.

By agreeing to meet these people or turning up to a prestigious event like an Inauguration, Dylan is not necessarily supporting policies or making some statement of support of that person. He is flattered, interested, might just want to meet up with friends who will also be there, and, at this stage of his life and career, he is considered part of the American fabric and so probably would not even be aware of a discrepancy by his presence.

Personally I was simply happy when Tipper Gore left the Washington Wives a few months ago. (Al's winning may benefit music lovers everywhere!) The one jar I received watching Dylan singing to the Gores was thinking about Tipper's censorship of lyrical content, which I know by interview comments Dylan was not happy about. This to me was the one incongruity. Dylan of all people would support freedom of expression and for Tipper (what a stupid name!) to smile while watching the original lyric dissenter of all time (that's an awkward description but you know what I mean) was simply a farce! (Then again, she is not too bright and unless he says "fuck" or "bitch" maybe she does not hear controversial lyrics!)

Another point to consider, no one knows the interests of the record companies. Perhaps all the artists may have vaguely thought turning up might mean tax concessions for their industry at some future date. Or individually, as artists, tax on blank cassettes was being discussed in the US at that time, was it not?, which would affect every artist there. Or maybe they just thought of the free publicity - something again their record companies would be anxious for them to take advantage of.

Lastly I read those two letters to *The Telegraph* and thought - depending on the writers' ages - Tony Parsons' view is once again overthrown. People are just as idealistic today as they ever were.

# **You Don't Know Me**

## **Stories from a Never Ending Concert**

Text by Paolo Vites - Photos by Guido Harari

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The tape begins with a loud burst of applause - applause which sounds staccato, computerised almost. Oddly, at the same time it sounds otherworldly, ghostly even. Maybe that is what it is. The ghosts of another time, another place, frozen and bound forever on or by the magnetic tape so that they can be made manifest at my beckoning by the merest application of my thumb upon the "play" button of my Walkman. I become the ghost-master, but the ghosts are all in my head.

A ghost whistles. Somewhere in the applause is the hint of a harmonica. And then the rhythmic acoustic guitar; briefly repetitive, then moving onto a higher note, a more delicate pattern; then rhythmic, then more urgent, more insistent and for a split second you anticipate the voice, but too soon. A return to delicacy, then insistence, then .....

*She's got everything she needs, she's an artist, she don't look back.  
She's got everything she needs, she's an artist, she don't look back.  
She can take the dark out of the night-time and paint the daytime black.*

The "time" in night-time is puffed out somehow. It's as if he's trying to blow a fly off the microphone - the T is both forceful and soft, a sort of spat whisper. Does that make any sense? Whatever .... it's pure Dylan. The "paint" is expressed, held briefly, perhaps slightly elongated, but has that nasal, country-southernish (?) drawl - a way of expressing himself that so many have tried (and failed) to imitate. The voice is what I want to describe but I don't know where to find the words. I could say it is like a soft breeze blowing through a hillside conifer plantation, but I'm not sure if it is even like that. Paul Williams talks of "thick textures of sweet mournfulness" but I'm looking for my own phrase. It does seem to possess a texture of something, as if you could touch it, but a texture of what? Of bitter honey? Can that be it? You see my difficulty. If you have the tape, listen to it. If you don't, the nearest I can suggest to you is **Visions Of Johanna** or **Baby Blue** from **Biograph**. The voice is what makes this acoustic set special. The guitar playing does not seem to me to be at all out of the ordinary - it does not compare, for instance, with that on **Freewheelin'**. The harmonica, of course, is inspired: searing and keening, exploding in bursts of vibrant energy across the ethereal auditorium. But, for this time at least, it's the voice that matters.

And what is this "time" to which I am referring? Well, if you haven't worked it out by now, this is the Royal Albert Hall, 27th May 1966. The last concert of what was to be the last tour for 7 and a half years. The beginning of the acoustic set. A beginning that creates imaginings in my mind - imaginings of a small, frail, marionette lost in a stately pleasure dome. No, I wasn't there, so these are visions, not memories. Visions of a lost thinness, clothed in a .....suit? Hard to believe that, but all the photos from that tour show it to be true. Was it a dogstooth suit? Is that what it's called? Anyway, it was a thousand miles from either the "Huck Finn" tramp of 1961 or the comfortable scruffiness of today.

No, I wasn't there, and if you were then I'm sorry if these ramblings and visions of mine do not coincide with your memories. I was at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester, on 15th May 1966 but my memories of that are actually more vague than the images that this tape evokes in my mind. Nearly all that I can remember from the Leicester show is people walking out, seemingly (to my memory) in droves, and other people booing and slow-handclapping. Some cheered him, but I feel that they were a minority. I cannot claim that I was wise enough to know what he was doing at the time. I sat in silence (well, not exactly silence, the music was so LOUD - I had heard nothing like it before), dumbfounded, fence-sitting, not knowing whether to cheer or boo. Please forgive me.

Actually, there is a scene near the end of **Eat The Document** which was filmed outside the De Montfort Hall before the show. I've "paused" every second of that piece of video trying to get a sight of a younger me, but in vain. The thing is I do remember waiting outside the hall with friends for the doors to open - it was a pleasant spring evening. There is the merest glimpse of the side of a bespectacled head which I like to pretend is myself - but I don't really believe it. Ah, well. It would have been nice to have featured in a Bob Dylan movie!

A word of warning: this essay will add nothing to the sum total of knowledge about Dylan's art. It is not interpretative or literary critical. If you are looking for insight, search elsewhere. This is utterly subjective. It is an attempt at a hymn of praise - an appreciation - a eulogy - a shot at describing what it is in this performance that moves my heart and my very soul. If that sounds excessive, this is not for you. Why am I bothering writing this? Because I just love this concert and that makes me want to try to communicate the feelings I experience when I listen to it.

Wish me luck.

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## THE SYMMETRY OF INNOCENCE

---

There are seven songs in this acoustic set (which is all I'm concentrating upon), a set which on my tape lasts approximately 61 minutes, including applause and guitar doodling between songs. This makes Hammersmith '93 seem pretty rapid-fire stuff, even though he then had a band to extend the songs for him! Anyway, the magnificent Seven are as follows:-

### Royal Albert Hall - 27 May 1966

- ◆ **She Belongs To Me**
- ◆ **Fourth Time Around**
- ◆ **Visions Of Johanna**
- ◆ **It's All Over Now, Baby Blue**
- ◆ **Desolation Row**
- ◆ **Just Like A Woman**
- ◆ **Mr Tambourine Man**

These seem, to me, to represent a deliberately structured acoustic concert. All are taken from the three awesome mid-sixties albums, the first three electric albums of his career. Has any artist produced three greater consecutive albums ever - let alone within such a short timespan? Consider this:-

Three songs from *Bringing It All Back Home*  
One song from *Highway 61 Revisited*  
Three songs from *Blonde On Blonde*

There is a certain characteristic idiosyncrasy in the fact that Dylan chose for his acoustic set, seven songs from his first three electric albums. Typical Dylan, don't you think? He also selected, I would suggest, one classic masterpiece from each album (**Tambourine Man**, **Desolation Row**, **Visions Of Johanna** - though if you were to press the case for **Baby Blue** I would not argue with you). Symmetry is also present in the use of songs to his muse to both open and close the set - more of this later. When you consider where Dylan was, artistically speaking, at the time of this tour, the selection of these songs feels absolutely right. They are evidence, if any is needed, that this acoustic set was not, and was never intended to be, a re-run of the 1965 tour. This was a new Dylan with a new selection of songs (*Blonde On Blonde* had not been released in England, and would not be until August) and singing in a new style. It was light years away, in voice, guitar style, lyrics, even harmonica style, from the Woody Guthrie clone of earlier years. Listen to the very good recording of Manchester 1965 back to back with any 1966 acoustic set and you will hear two very different performers. It is, therefore, a cryin' shame that these acoustic songs are so often overlooked - understandable because of the magnificence of the electric sets - but a desperate pity all the same.

Commentators often seem to present these 1966 acoustic sets as Dylan going through the motions; pandering to audience expectations even. The theory seems to be that he had become bored with acoustic performance and that he just wanted to get the first half of the concert over with so that he could plunge into the real, electric, business of the evening. Of course, the electric sets were seminal events in Rock History, but I don't think you can listen carefully to 1966 acoustic and honestly draw the conclusion that the first half of the show didn't matter to Dylan. These are some of the most magical acoustic performances of Dylan's career; possibly the best ever. Manifestly he MEANT this. It is no half-hearted throwaway performance; it is a creation of inspired intensity - even if it is partly chemical inspiration, there is clearly another, more mystical source from which these fertile waters spring.

Cameron Crowe in the *Biograph* booklet calls the 26th May **Visions Of Johanna** "otherworldly", and I cannot find a better word. Paul Williams (*Performing Artist, Volume 1*) describes the 1966 acoustic set as sounding as if Dylan "is singing straight from dreamtime". All of these words - otherworldly, ghost-like, dreamtime, ethereal, foggy, - think about them. Put them all together. What sounds and visions does this combination of words evoke in your mind? Imagine that and you have some faint idea (if you don't have the tape) just what it is that I'm trying to convey.



Another point about these seven songs is that, unusually for Dylan, almost every word, every syllable, is clearly and precisely expressed - sometimes very slowly, as if he's been taking elocution lessons. Can you believe that? Nothing is slurred, nothing mumbled; which is quite remarkable given that he's undeniably drugged up to the gills!

### "FOR HE ON HONEY-DEW HATH FED"

---

And so, I suppose, we must come to the issue of drugs. It is surely impossible to discuss this concert without doing so? Now, I have a problem here. My problem is that I am a total innocent where drugs are concerned - alcohol, yes, but drugs? Nothing. Zilch. No experience at all. I can remember the sixties, so I couldn't have been there, could I?

Paul Williams writes: "amphetamines were Dylan's drug of choice", though he indicates that they were probably supplemented by a wide variety of other substances plus alcohol. A colleague of mine's husband is a medical consultant. I asked her to describe Dylan's performance in this concert to him and ask him if this was indicative of amphetamine use. I had read an article from a "privately-circulated" fanzine which suggested that this singing in slow motion fitted with the effects of amphetamines - that they make you think you are doing things at a rapid pace, whilst in fact they slow you down. He (the consultant) thought it more likely that this effect was caused by the drugs wearing off, i.e. that Dylan needed another shot to return him to normality!

Clinton Heylin (*Behind The Shades*) writes that the acoustic set sounds as if Dylan was on dope, whereas by the electric set he sounds like a speed-freak. The implication being that Dylan used drugs to enhance his performance (like an Olympic athlete) and changed chemicals at the interval.

To me, knowing nothing, it would be remarkable if Dylan was able to use drugs in this way. Nonetheless, I have to admit that, in this final 1966 concert, he seems to demonstrate by the quality of this eerie performance, that drugs do not detract from his achievement, at the very least. In fact, his ability to recall the many complex lyrics of these mystical songs shows that he was well able to control his mind, no matter what chemicals he ingested. Whatever the truth of this, the mixture of Dylan, drugs and adrenalin left us with a tape about which it is no over-statement to say that the sound is sublime; the very milk of paradise. I could not wish it to sound otherwise. It is inconceivable that it could be improved upon.

It is perhaps worth observing how much things have changed in 25 years. I believe that most readers of this magazine are accepting of the fact that Dylan was using drugs in 1966. And yet, by 1991, considerable controversy arose in *Isis* over allegations that he was going on stage during the Never Ending Tour either under the influence of alcohol or drugs or both. I did not then, and still do not, understand why people find such behaviour acceptable in 1966 but not in 1991. Actually, the controversy seemed to divide into two camps - those who thought he was abusing his body and were therefore critical of him because of the effects upon his performance - and those who denied that he was using alcohol/drugs before concerts.

Now, I may be out on a limb here, but I would not wish to deny that he used something on occasions in 1991, nor would I wish to condemn him for it. In fact, for me, it all adds to the myth of the man. There is something romantic and compelling about Dylan's use of artificial stimulants. It's part of his history and if, at times, it is still part of his present, so be it. I don't have a problem with that. I don't wish him ill, quite the contrary, but I sort of like this side of him. It makes him more human. As a correspondent of mine wrote, if people want a clean-living hero, let them have Cliff Richard, not Dylan.

The same applies, for me, to his various appearances on Network TV. I'm quite happy that events like Live Aid or the Grammy Awards are widely perceived as sloppy, unprofessional efforts. It means that Dylan remains an acquired taste; very special to a few thousand of us, a total mystery to millions. I don't actually want to go to work one morning and find all my colleagues raving about Dylan. If that day comes I'm going to have to share him and then, not only won't he be special, I won't feel so special myself either. Let those who don't understand him remain in darkness, whilst we select few keep him to ourselves. Is that desperately elitist and selfish? You needn't answer that!

So now let us return to that 27 May concert where we left Dylan, if you remember, painting the daytime black.

## SHE BELONGS TO ME

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This seems an entirely appropriate opener if Stephen Scobie's reference (*Alias Bob Dylan*) to this as a song to his Muse is justified. It certainly sounds as if Dylan is struggling here to stay on the road, to keep on keepin' on and coming up with spellbinding performances. Scobie sees **She Belongs To Me** stressing the "distance and demands of the muse, the degree to which he is at times at her mercy":-

*You will start out standing, proud to steal her anything she sees.  
But you will wind up peeking through her keyhole down upon your knees*

He also sees this as a position of humiliation rather than prayer. But in the situation Dylan faces as he walks out on that stage in that classical auditorium on 27th May 1966, I feel that this opening song is a prayer. Aidan Day (*Jokerman*) also sees this song exhibiting "the darker aspects of daemonic energy". I'm no performer myself so I don't know. I imagine that a performance is as much an act of creation as the writing of a song. Hence, Dylan must have been seeking inspiration afresh each evening to "create" his live art. I don't imagine it is easy to build yourself up each night to present an inspired act. For this reason, a song to invoke his muse is intuitively understandable - it feels right. A prayer to Her : "be with me now when I need you" he seems to be singing, "don't let me down now, not now, not at this moment. This is the last night in Europe. See me through just once more and I won't ask again - not for a while anyway." And did she answer him? And was the price paid later with the Woodstock accident? Or was that another reward - the granting of peace and a respite?

On the evidence of this reading of the song, she surely answered him. This first song of the evening is every bit as misty, as foggy, as nebulous as were the next half-dozen acoustic dreams to be. It is as if Dylan was singing through a veil and yet, though these are mystical and bitter-sweet dreams, they ring with the clarity of a bell.

There are several highlights on this version of **She Belongs To Me**. At the end of the second verse "down upon your knees" is as expressed, elongated and whispered as "paint the daytime black" in verse one. "Upon" is vocalised to match precisely the earlier "paint". There is a harmony to these last lines. Then there is the addition that makes it an *Egyptian red ring*, which marvellously does not interfere at all with the rhythm of the song. And finally - the harmonica .....oh, that harmonica.....

In between this song and **Fourth Time Around** there is quite a bit of doodling on guitar and harmonica. This is something which happens between each song. This was not unusual in the sixties, it was something which serious rock musicians had to do - the fine tuning of their instruments being an affirmation of their musicianship. I do not accuse Dylan of pretentiousness, I simply remind you that this was not unusual.

## FOURTH TIME AROUND

---

Michael Gray (*Song and Dance Man*) says this "begins as a cold mocking put-down of a girl and a relationship untouched by love", but soon switches to a "second and love-tinged relationship". But what really hits you, every time you hear it, is what Gray calls "coarse sexual innuendo". Just listen to how Dylan pronounces "and when she did come" - there is no doubting his meaning! This is a sexiness of a totally different order from that of Madonna or Right Said Fred. It's not brassy or cheeky. It is crude.

There is a beautiful harmonica intro to this one - and all the harp-playing in this set is just wonderful. I cannot say enough to do it justice. And when he gets to the line:-

*So I forced my hands in my pockets and felt with my thumbs*

- the way he sings "thumbs" is unbelievable. He sort of holds the M, so that he elongates the word to sound like thummmmmmm. It seems like forever, and just when you think he is only using one thumb, you get a very deliberate hissed S.

This one incident shows, I think, the care and precision with which, through all the drugs, he approaches this performance. It is inimitable Dylan.



## VISIONS OF JOHANNA

---

This complex, mysterious, involved and obscure masterpiece is one of the evening's highlights. If ever a song was made to sound exactly the way the lyrics feel, this is it. It is pure atmosphere - smoky, hazy, foggy, misty, druggy - and it lives as atmosphere. You can breathe it, inhale it, absorb it, imbibe it through your headphones. I can't believe that anyone has ever sung like this - even Dylan has not attempted to recreate this performance. Why should he? It starts with this wonderful introduction. Strangely he actually starts to play the instrumental opening on his guitar and then, as if it were an afterthought, he starts to speak to the audience before he stops playing the guitar:- *Ah .. I'm not going to be playing any more concerts here in England. I just wanted to say...that er.. .that er...it's, er, it's, er, it's all wrong to..er...to, er....this is a typical example of probably one song that your English music newspapers, here, would call a drug song. I don't, I don't write druuuug songs. You know, like I never have. I wouldn't know how to go about it. But, you know...er..this is not a drug song (laughter, applause) I, I'm not saying this for any kind of defensive reason or anything like that. It's just not a drug song. It's just vulgar to think so.*

And then he goes into this indescribable, heavenly, ineffable performance. A performance that is all ether - where "harmonicas play the skeleton keys (what a phrase for this concert) in the rayayin" and these visions of Bob Dylan are now all that remain.....

## IT'S ALL OVER NOW, BABY BLUE

---

Another eminently appropriate selection for this concert at this time in Dylan's career. *The sky too, is falling under you* - isn't that exactly how it must have felt to this strung-out, totally wired young man, at the peak of his youthful fame and rock-star adulation? *I accept chaos, I am not sure whether it accepts me*, Dylan had said in 1965. It's All Over Now, Baby Blue is a more poetic statement of similar emotions. As Aidan Day writes, it is a disconcerting "usurpation of the known". By May 1966 it must have felt that all was chaos, and maybe these structured and patterned acoustic sets were something of an attempt to impose order upon this chaos? Who knows? Certainly not me, I can only tell you how it feels when I listen to this tape.

And how does it feel, Baby Blue? It feels wistful; it feels desperately sad and lonesome. *You must leave now, take what you need, you think will last*. Surely this is Paul Williams' "sweet mournfulness"? Once upon a time you dressed so fine but now something is happening and you don't know what it is, do you, Baby Blue? This is as evocative and poignant as it gets and I still can't find the words to describe it. Voices echo down the tape, down the years, but it's all so insubstantial. You want to catch it, bottle it, cradle it in your arms, but it's not there. You try to grab it, but your hand passes through it - it's pure spirit and the spectres loom again....

## DESOLATION ROW

---

Michael Gray likens this classical musical poem to **The Waste Land** and surely he is correct. He also, at another point, invokes **The Love Song Of J.Alfred Prufrock**; again, perfectly appropriately. Eliot must've been one of Dylan's influences at this time. And the way familiar characters are portrayed as standing inside someone else's shoes (*Einstein disguised as Robin Hood. The Phantom of the Opera in the perfect image of a priest*) gives the song, yet again, a peculiar affinity with Dylan's life situation, circa 9 o'clock on 27th May 1966. More circumstantial evidence that this acoustic set was not a throwaway routine but a carefully considered and preconceived drama.

Paul Williams writes that the last three songs of this acoustic set are "good enough to stand next to the best work of any twentieth century artist" - a huge claim, but totally justified. But perhaps the most amazing thing is that he actually remembers the whole of **Desolation Row**!

## JUST LIKE A WOMAN

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There is a little good-humoured interplay with the audience before this song. You hear a clink - though it's not possible to tell whether this relates to his interjection (and the audience is laughing already), but shortly after this he says: *don't do that (laughs). That's terrible...(laughs)...that's terrible, terrible*. It's as if he's caught a member of the audience masturbating. More audience amusement follows and lingers awhile.

And then... he begins the most sublime guitar intro you ever heard to any song. Forget what I said at the outset about his guitar-playing on this night not being out of the ordinary. I was wrong. On this song at least, it is divine - inspired - affecting - dazzling. Choose your own superlatives, they will still be inadequate. He seems to begin by picking out, faintly, the theme, then he moves more dominantly into the melody before using the harmonica briefly and then:

*Nobody feels any pain.....toniiiiight as I stand inside the rain*

This time, this song is all expression. The way he vocalises certain words - "curls" "aches" "came in hee-ere" "curse, worse" "ayaynt it clear" are among my favourites - is utterly unique. And the way he sings "Hungry" is all aspirated H. It's lovely!

And, of course *with her fog, her amphetamines and her pearls* is just as weirdly apt as was *the harmonica plays the skeleton keys* on **Visions**. Although a minor composition when placed alongside **Tambourine Man**, **Visions** and **Desolation Row**, this is, I think, my second favourite performance of the evening. It may even be my favourite; it's so hard to be sure. And it finishes with yet another inspired harmonica solo.

## MR TAMBOURINE MAN

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Another invocation of the muse, and so we come full circle. **She Belongs To Me** opening the set - a prayer for inspiration. **Mr Tambourine Man** closing it, a work which "evidences an attainment of the creative moment which its speaker spends so much time anticipating" (Aidan Day). Eternal Circle indeed. That sense again that Dylan has carefully and specifically chosen to sing these seven songs in the precise order in which they are left to us.

This song includes within it (before the last verse) an exquisite harmonica break which lasts for 2 minutes and 22 seconds! 142 seconds of unbroken, heavenly harp-playing. And can you believe this? No-one, not a single soul, bursts into applause at the end of this harmonica break! If this had been Hammersmith 1993 it would have brought the house down, you'd never have heard the next verse. I always want to applaud just sitting in my armchair. Sometimes I do. Were these polite ghosts all sitting on their hands or what? They must have been truly bloodless.

The song fades out before the last line of the chorus. It doesn't stop dead like when the tape runs out, it actually fades, gradually gets fainter, then vanishes away. Paul Williams sees this as an appropriate reminder "that there are limits to our power to teleport ourselves to 1966, and of what a miracle it is that these performances survive at all". To me it is equally appropriate. I see it as poetic, serendipitous somehow, exactly right. As if the ghostly singer has passed through the solid walls of our expectations never to materialise in this form again.

## "AND THE ONLY SOUND THAT'S LEFT..."

---

There is a strangeness about this whole performance which I can find in no other tape in my collection. "Otherworldly" is a phrase I've already borrowed and it is perfect. Is it just the drugs? I don't think so. Is it a unique interaction of the acoustics of the Albert Hall with Dylan's acoustic performance? Perhaps. It is certainly mystical and magical - it should have been Hallowe'en.

The word that best describes Dylan's singing on this occasion is sublime - sweet sublimity. To me it does sound the way you might expect a ghost to sing. It is, in the truest sense of the words, out of this world. It is almost unbelievable that living, breathing, warm human flesh, blood and bone could produce a sound like this. There is something about the blend of acoustics, drugs and Dylan that creates an absolutely "out of body" experience for the listener. I don't know how or why the chemistry(!) was so right. I only know that it is unrepeatable, other than by rolling that tape.

Those ghosts are still there, you know, at my fingertips and, if you're lucky, at yours. In fact, they multiply every time you copy the tape for a friend. I've consummated many a friendship with the reproduction of this concert. I've despatched ghosts to towns around England. There's a set of ghosts resting in a cassette case in South-West France - ghosts that I released. I don't want to exorcise these particular ghosts - ever. I've put my own set away now that I've finished this essay. But they'll be back one day. Applause..harmonica..guitar...*She's got everything she ne-eeds....*

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**LEGENDS DYLAN, SANTANA TO SHARE STAGE IN CHARLOTTE**


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**STATE** (COLUMBIA) (CS) - FRIDAY September 10, 1993

By: GREG KOT, *Chicago Tribune*

Edition: FINAL Section: WEEKEND Page: 8D

Their days as media-hyped supernovas behind them, Bob Dylan and Carlos Santana say they couldn't be happier. Dylan, who merely changed the course of popular culture in the 20th century, and Santana, who stretched the boundaries of rock guitar after his explosive coming-out party at Woodstock, will share the stage Sept. 17 at the Blockbuster Pavilion in Charlotte.

If such a pairing had occurred in, say, 1970, it would have been an event on par today with a Nirvana/Pearl Jam double bill. But neither Dylan nor Santana is central to the pop Zeitgeist these days, nor do they seem particularly keen to keep up with a new generation of rock icons. (If anything, it's the other way around; at last year's tribute to Dylan at Madison Square Garden, Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder and Mike McCready performed a particularly moving version of Dylan's **Masters of War**.)

Dylan's last release, **Good as I Been to You** (Columbia), is a stark, solo acoustic album in which he interpreted a variety of traditional folk and blues, throwbacks to his days at Gerdes Folk City in Greenwich Village. He says a new album, out this year, will take a similar but "more focused" approach to another batch of traditional songs.

Santana's 1992 album, **Milagro** (Polydor), contains a few cliché-ridden forays into pop but also is laced with adventurous guitar excursions that draw as much from post-**Bitches Brew** jazz as they do rock.

In a three-way phone hookup, Dylan and Santana remained as iconoclastic as ever. Santana was typically passionate and effusive, while Dylan spoke with a warmth and directness that belied his reputation as an enigmatic interview.

*My whole thing has been about disallowing demagoguery, Dylan says. The songs I recorded in my past, they're almost like demos. I'm still trying to figure out what some of them are about. The more I play them, the better idea I have of how to play them.* Which may explain why Dylan seems perpetually inclined to tamper with his classics, messing with chords and altering his phrasing as he turns **Like a Rolling Stone** into a shuffle or **All Along the Watchtower** into a dissonant rocker.

*My audience has changed over a couple of times now, Dylan says. A lot of 'em don't even know Like a Rolling Stone. They're not enchanted by the past, and I don't allow the past to encroach on the present.*

Santana, who broke ground by mixing rock guitar with Latin percussion on such songs as **Soul Sacrifice**, says, *I made a commitment about 1972, with our fourth album, which was almost all instrumental, to go another way. I learned from people like Miles Davis and Weather Report. I wasn't afraid of any comparisons, because I was too concerned about the next note.*

If the music of Dylan and Santana takes on a new life onstage, it has struggled to find its identity in the studio during the past 15 years. It's no surprise that Dylan's best record in years - **Good as I Been to You** - was recorded live in one take.

*Modern recording technology never endeared itself to me, Dylan says. My kind of sound is very simple, with a little bit of echo, and that's about all that's required to record it. The way most records sound these days, everything is equalized. My kind of music is based on non-equalized parts, where one sound isn't necessarily supposed to be as loud as another. When producers try to equal everything out, it's to dismal effect on my records.*

Clearly, Dylan's career, even at age 52, is still a work in progress. Which is why it seemed a bit odd for a bevy of rock stars, from Neil Young to George Harrison, to be paying tribute to him at Madison Square Garden last year, even if it was the 30th anniversary of his first record.

Dylan says it was *hard not to be overwhelmed, but it was really about all those songs, speaking as though someone else had written them. It was fun to hear them performed. I just tried to stay out of it.*

As Dylan electrified his music, figuratively and literally, in the mid-'60s, he was greeted by boos, most notoriously at the Newport Folk Festival and then on an epochal tour of England with the Hawks, later known as The Band. *It*



*was weird at Newport, because you could tell these people were trying to follow me, but I was a bit ahead of them, Dylan says. You just try and dust yourself off and get on with it. With The Band, it (the audience reaction) would be consistent, every town we played in. It seemed a lot of it was a media thing, where they were telling the audience ahead of the show what to expect. It would cause the audience to react a certain way, instead of deciding for themselves. It was one of those things that was . . . very corrosive.*

Santana says he has dealt with isolated boo-birds, *but I don't take it personally. It's usually somebody who's in the wrong place. One time in London, I told a guy to come up and handed him my guitar. He choked on his own emotions. I said, 'You have to make love to it; you don't just jump in.'*

Dylan is equally skeptical of the new wave of rock and rap artists whose records bristle with graphic images of sex and violence. In the '60s, Dylan's approach to such subject matter was deemed revolutionary, with its mix of humor and spite. *I'm not saying they should be censored, but it would be nice if there were some kind of quality control, he says. A lot of stuff out there is just not meaningful. The record companies shouldn't be involved (in censoring artists), but maybe the artist should be made to sign a contract asking, 'Do you mean it?'*

## TIME WARP: BOB DYLAN

**Oregonian** (PO) - FRIDAY, August 20, 1993

By: MARTY HUGHLEY - of the Oregonian Staff

Edition: FOURTH Section: ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT Page: AE07

*Bob Dylan steps out from his own shadow so that he can keep on making the music*

To many Americans, his significance isn't about his 22 gold records, his Lifetime Achievement Award at the 1991 Grammys, or his being named one of "The 100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Century" by *Life* magazine, or any other of the countless accolades he has received. His significance is that he's Bob Dylan.

Of course, there are reasons why that name resonates more powerfully than Robert Allen Zimmerman, the name he was born with 52 years ago in Duluth, Minn. His early topical protest songs helped galvanize a generation and give consciousness to an emerging counterculture. Classic albums such as *Blonde on Blonde* and *Highway 61 Revisited* melded folk depth with rock energy in cauldrons of searing passion. And on through the years, he continued to change, chasing a powerful but elusive muse while trying to dodge the long shadows of his fame.

That last part, at least, hasn't worked.

*Celebrity is a trick, Dylan said, barely audible in a recent conference call interview with Carlos Santana, who shares the bill for his Friday night show in Portland. It's just a big trick that gets played on people. There's a lot of good you can do with it if you can twist it around. But mostly it's just a joke played on someone - when you want to be known for what it is you do rather than for who you are. You have to use your own barometer. In some ways it can help you influence people one way or another who might not listen to someone who wasn't a 'big celebrity.' But basically it kind of gets in the way when you're trying to deal with people one-on-one.*

As with the Rolling Stones, the Grateful Dead and other '60s survivors, Dylan is sometimes seen as an irrelevant relic. His albums of the past decade or so have been uneven, and many critics have claimed that he doesn't care anymore.

*After making 30 or 40 records, the impetus to make 'em starts to disintegrate, he acknowledges. But he's not saying he's bored; he's saying he finds the excitement of playing live more important these days. My early records were made very quickly, usually in a couple of days, he said. Some of my records in the late '80s, more like weeks or months were spent on them. That's a lot of time to spend in the studio. A lot of your brain becomes dormant when you do that.*

*New material comes or it doesn't come. It's like throwing darts at the wall - it's difficult to tell whether they're sticking or not. But when you're playing live, it's right there - you can tell when the energy's happening or when it's not.*

Throughout this, Dylan sounds, if anything, smaller-than-life. Perhaps it's just the phone connection. But maybe it's the quiet voice of a man who disavows his status as a myth so that he can continue to be an artist.

*My audience has changed at least three times in my career, he says, seeming pleased with the fact. People that would canonize me, they fall away after awhile. And a new audience comes to hear what I'm doing.*

## CONCERT GUIDE: SANTANA AND BOB DYLAN

**Atlanta Constitution** (AC) - Friday September 17, 1993

By: - Russ DeVault

Section: PREVIEW Page: F/4

When: 6:30 p.m. Saturday. (The early start is because each musician will play for about two hours with Carlos Santana performing first.) Where: Chastain Park Amphitheatre, Powers Ferry Road at Stella Drive. Tickets: Sold out.

What to expect: Santana, a joyously uninhibited performer, is likely to segue from **Black Magic Woman** to absolutely serious songs reflecting his religious beliefs and faith in miracles. The nature of Dylan's set can't even be guessed at - after several years of concerts marked by mumbling, strangely altered lyrics and erratic performances, he's been dead-on during most shows in the past year. *He's done some great shows during this run with Santana*, one out-of-town promoter says.



*Like rolling stones:* They're in their fourth decade of touring and recording, but neither Dylan, 52, nor Santana, 46, is about to slow down - and retiring seems out of the question. After issuing six releases in the past four years, Dylan plans to have another new recording for Columbia - his label since 1961 - later this year.

Santana's projects include two live CD/cassettes and a video due this fall. A CBS/Sony boxed set will be out next year.

Atlanta fans sometimes get to Dylan: Neither his larger-than-life image nor his lost-in-the-music style of performing has insulated Dylan from local concertgoers. He recoiled, seemingly in fear, when a zealous female fan jumped onstage and tried to hug him during a late-1980s concert at the Fox Theatre. Then, after the first of a two-night stand at Chastain Park Amphitheatre several years ago, he ordered his microphone moved back, saying that he didn't enjoy seeing up-close fans eating while he performed.

Recommended recordings: Dylan - *Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia, 1965 (or any of his 1960s recordings); *The Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3 (Rare & Unreleased)*, Columbia, 1991. Santana - *Santana's Greatest Hits*, Columbia, 1974; *Milagro*, Polydor, 1992 (a tribute to Bill Graham and Miles Davis).

## THE MINNESOTA CONNECTION

**St. Paul Pioneer Press** (ST) - SUNDAY, August 22, 1993

By: Rob Hubbard, Staff Writer

Edition: Metro Final Section: Showtime Page: 1E

Your heart may swell with pride to say that Bob Dylan - arguably among the three to five most significant figures in rock history<sup>1</sup> - is a native of our humble state, having been born in Duluth and raised in the mining metropolis of Hibbing. But Dylan is notoriously unnostalgic about his home state (or anything else, for that matter). His writings betray that he often felt unappreciated here, whether up on the Range or during his brief tenure on the Minneapolis coffeehouse circuit circa '60. Not until he took the Greenwich Village folk scene by storm did he truly feel in his element. However, some sentimentality occasionally shows through. He shocked everyone when, at the height of his popularity, he attended his high school's 10-year reunion in 1967. And, during a top-notch 1989 concert at Harriet Island, he performed almost half of his groundbreaking 1965 *Bringing It All Back Home* album. Coincidence or what?

<sup>1</sup>What's this "arguably" all about then?

## SPIRITS OF THE '60S SANTANA, DYLAN PROMOTE HARMONY

**Detroit Free Press** (FP) - Monday August 30, 1993

By: Gene Stout Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Edition: Metro Final Section: FTR Page: 3E

If this tour had taken place 20 years ago, it would have drawn Lollapalooza-like attention. Then, Bob Dylan's nasal voice sang songs crucial to a burgeoning youth culture, and Carlos Santana's crying guitar riffs exploded regularly from radio speakers.

But, alas, it's 1993 and the luster has dimmed on both their careers.

Dylan and Santana, who perform Tuesday at Pine Knob, seemed puzzled when asked why they were on the road together. Though Dylan has toured with Tm Petty and the Heartbreakers, the Grateful Dead and many other artists, he couldn't explain the special chemistry that had put him on the road with Santana.

*Somebody just asked me about it one day, and I said I'd do it, he said, trailing off.*

Santana helped fill the void.

*Basically people feel that both my music and Bob's music can be very complementary to the audience, Santana said. We did this in '84 and people really enjoyed a full day of music that moved them. They go home and there's a certain music that gets inside you. It's not over when you unplug the amplifiers and the trucks roll away. We feel that together it's a wonderful combination to serve the people. There's a lot of beautiful things that we offer that will be contagious, so that people can cry, laugh, dance, maybe have a spiritual orgasm.*

Santana said he first met Dylan around 20 years ago. *When I first met Bob it was a very strong time for America. There were a lot of great changes happening.*

In 1984, Dylan told the **Los Angeles Times** he was glad he had begun his career in the '60s. *Everything happened so quick in the '60s. There was just an electricity in the air. It's hard to explain - I mean, you didn't ever want to go to sleep because you didn't want to miss anything.*

But Dylan had a more cautious outlook on that era recently. *It's important not to be caught in a time warp, he said. The '60s were the '60s. To someone who wasn't there, it's difficult to explain what it was like. But every time is important as long as you're living and breathing.*

Could Dylan perhaps pick a few modern artists who generate electricity for him today?

Silence. Earth to Bob. Santana intervened: *Baaaaahhbbb?*

Much of Dylan's response was barely audible. *My tastes run more toward the older styles, he finally said.*

Santana, on the other hand, was effusive about the Wailing Souls - the show's opening act - and what he believed was the driving force of the Dylan-Santana tour. *There's very few bands lately that can really captivate you, he said of the Wailing Souls.*

*When people come they're going to be able to shake off whatever problems and burdens they have. That's what music is supposed to do. It's supposed to make you forget about the rent and all the things that happen with the world. Not necessarily escape, but drop it if you can't do anything with it.*

Dylan admitted that song selection is tricky. His repertoire of songs is unbelievably vast. *It'll be difficult cutting it down to an hour, he said. Dylan's latest album, **Good As I Been to You**, is devoted almost entirely to traditional folk and country-blues songs - among them **Blackjack Davey**, **Diamond Joe** and **Froggie Went a Courtin'** - with new arrangements by Dylan.*

*..... Then a bit about Santana omitted here.....*

Dylan had the last word: *There's a surprise element in every tour. It remains to be seen what this show will mean to people*



## AIN'T NO USE IN TURNING ON THE LIGHT, BABE - IT WAS DYLAN ALL RIGHT

**STAR TRIBUNE** (MS) - Saturday, August 28, 1993  
 By: Jon Bream, Staff Writer  
 Edition: Metro Edition Section: VARIETY Page: 05B

Was that really Bob Dylan at the Minnesota State Fair on Friday night?

After opening the concert, veteran rocker Carlos Santana promised, *Stick around for the homeboy - Bob....*

And the next voice over the public-address system announced, from offstage, "Would you please welcome Minnesota's own Bob Dylan?"

It sure sounded like Dylan, that unmistakable nasal whine. But did anybody at the fair actually see Dylan? From my choice seat in the second-row center, I could make out a halo of wispy curls in the dim light onstage. Shadows covered the singer's face. And he wouldn't allow the fair to use its live video setup so all 14,538 people in the wide-spanning grandstand could see the homecoming hero. So how did Dylan sound? Hit and miss, like most Dylan concerts since he returned to performing in 1974. Last night's 1 ¾-hour performance certainly wasn't in the same lofty league as his five fabulous concerts last summer at the intimate Historic Orpheum Theatre in Minneapolis. However, it was more rewarding than his unsatisfying State Fair performance in 1990.

## BOB DYLAN WILD, WEIRD, WONDERFUL

**TIMES UNION** (AL) - Monday, September 6, 1993  
 By: MICHAEL ECK  
 Special to the **Times Union**  
 Edition: THREE STAR Section: LIFE & LEISURE Page: C5

Bob Dylan - dressed head to toe in black cloth and mystery - strode the few steps up to the Saratoga Performing Arts Center's stage door, ducked in, and moments later was strumming away at his first tune. An hour and then some later Dylan retraced his quick steps - a white towel draped over his head, the black cloth, and the mystery - jumped into a car and was gone. He's wild, he's weird, he's wonderful; he's one of the most talented squirrels in the world.

Saturday night Dylan co-headlined at SPAC with Carlos Santana and his eponymous band; a bit of an odd billing considering the two share much more in theory (enigmatic '60s relics, creative contemporary artists) than their music does in practice. Dylan is the master of the endless lyric, Santana the master of the endless groove. Santana took the first slot on Friday and delivered a predominantly instrumental set.

Already over two hours into the show, the SPAC audience was a bit fidgety by the time Dylan arrived. They remained somewhere between bored and twitchy for most of the modern bard's set, despite the fact that he offered some pretty good stuff.

A Dylan show is always a coin flip, and Friday that quarter landed on its edge - between the wretched and brilliant poles Dylan has set up at previous area dates. Even his lead guitar playing - an even higher toss - was on target as often as not. But the real test of a Dylan concert is what he does with the words. At Saratoga he did plenty.

The vicious **Positively 4th Street** was stripped down to a slow funk, with a long-drawn-out delivery of the phrases. By contrast he followed with an amphetamine **Tangled Up In Blue**, cramming the many lines in with almost a rapper's sensibility. The lovely **Shooting Star** was re-read with a groove copped from pal Van Morrison's **Tupelo Honey**. And **Stuck Inside Of Mobile (With The Memphis Blues Again)** was rocked flat out. The jewel in the crown of this edition of what fans call *The Tour That Never Ends*<sup>2</sup> was a down and dirty jam that reclaimed the oft-covered **All Along The Watchtower** with every chorus of blurring lead guitars.

Wailing Souls 30-minute opening set was a joyful, glittery bout of reggae featuring the group's trademark tight singing. The highlight of their set was a sunny cover of Talking Heads' **Wild, Wild Life**.

<sup>2</sup>Well I wish you fans would stop calling it that, it is not only wrong but was never right!

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## DYLAN, SANTANA, WAILING SOULS MAKE IT WORK

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**Morning Call** (Allentown, PA) (MC) - Saturday, September 11, 1993

By: GEOFF GEHMAN, **The Morning Call**

Edition: THIRD Section: ENTERTAINMENT Page: A64

It sounded like a mismatched bill: a young reggae-based love band, a veteran fusion love band and a legendary cynic. But last Sunday's concert at the Montage ski resort outside Scranton worked quite well, as record-label mates Wailing Souls, Bob Dylan and Santana entertained eclectically about 5,000 would-be Woodstockers.

Wailing Souls began the show with a half-hour of bouncing global music. What separates this band from other jogging dreadlockers is an ability to shift quickly without poisoning the groove. A case study was a punchy, smartly balanced version of Talking Heads' **Wild, Wild Life**. If anyone has learned from others' interpretations, it's Bob Dylan. Last weekend he and his latest quartet invoked The Band with a slightly draggy **It's All Over Now, Baby Blue** and electric bluesmith Johnny Winter in a hopping, 12-minute **Maggie's Farm**. These were signs of the old nasty, enthusiastic Dylan, before he became a sour, mumbling seer.

This time, thank God, Dylan's vocals could be understood. He rarely rushed phrases, and while his voice sounded head coldish, at least it wasn't fluish. His fingers were extremely articulate: He and fellow guitarist John Jackson dueled piercingly, slicing open tunes such as **Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again**. Steel player Bucky Baxter heightened the mythology of **All Along The Watchtower** and the country ripples in **Watching The River Flow**.

As usual, Dylan robbed Peter to pay Paul. On disc, **Silvio** swings charmingly with the Grateful Dead; at Montage, it was one big lump. **Blackjack Davy**, part of a 20-minute acoustic set, would have bit deeper with just Bob. And all those codas were merely window dressing.

Santana was less finicky and more powerful in its 100-minute-plus set...

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## SHELTER FROM THE STORM: A DYLANIST EXPLAINS HIS ENDURING FAITH IN BOB.

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**The Washington Post**, September 19, 1993, FINAL Edition

By: Jefferson Morley, **Washington Post** Staff Writer

Section: SUNDAY SHOW,

*So what do you want to hear tonight?* my friend Luther asked as we climbed the hill to the Bob Dylan concert at Wolf Trap earlier this month. "**Shooting Star**," I answered before I really thought about it. It's not one of Dylan's better-known tunes; those who think of him as an "icon of the '60s" or a sign of the decline of Euro-American culture usually don't know it. It closed Dylan's 1989 album, **Oh Mercy**, a teardrop of a song with a sweet first line: *Seen a shooting star tonight/ And I thought of you.*

By the time we got to our seats in the middle of the first song, Dylan and the band were doing an irrepressible and unintelligible version of **Stuck Inside of Mobile (With the Memphis Blues Again)**. If I had to describe the noise, I would have said it was adult-oriented punk. Transcendence seemed very far away. But just a week before, on Sunday morning, the First Church of Bob (Takoma Park division) had come to order. My son, in the family tradition of ignoring religious instruction, was playing with his pet mouse. I was drinking coffee, washing the dishes and listening to Brother Stevie Wonder on the recently released double CD of the Dylan tribute concert held last October at Madison Square Garden. Stevie sang, *How many times can a man turn his head/ And pretend that he just doesn't see?* (The answer in Washington, my friend, is at least a seven-digit number.) Lou Reed (a deacon) sang the epistle **Foot of Pride**, about *a retired businessman named Red/ Cast out of Heaven and he's out of his head*. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (the junior choir of this dis-organized religion) reprised that familiar inspirational anthem: *But I would not feel so all alone/ Everybody must get stoned*. The O'Jays (the senior choir) launched into an operatic ode to lasting love, **Emotionally Yours**: *I know this dream it might be crazy/ But it's the only one I got.*

The "Bobfest," as the impious Neil Young affectionately dubbed that show, demonstrated that if there is no such thing as Dylanism, there is a multitude of Dylanists. I recalled that the singer Nina Simone once said,

*Bob Dylan is the closest thing to a saint white America has ever produced.*

Too true, Nina! The cultural figures comparable to Dylan in recent times-such as John Lennon and Bob Marley-are not Euro-Americans. Nor are they alive. The shy, stiff man in a pin-stripe jacket onstage at Wolf Trap is.

Dylan, of course, isn't a saint. He is, depending on your point of view, a hero, a sly uncle, some kind of poet, an edgy mentor, an incoherent huckster or a fallen star. His private life should probably not be emulated. He has, as a performer, been openly religious, but if he's a religious leader, I'm a parking meter.

Still, Dylan's Judeo-Christian ethics are surely central to his enduring appeal. He strikes me as a moral survivor in a world without memory. I went to high school across the street from the Minneapolis coffeehouse where a young Dylan had strummed his acoustic guitar-except by the time I got there the coffeehouse was a Burger King parking lot.

My faith in Dylan dates back at least to late 1983, the low point of the '80s, when the Marines were in Grenada, the SS-20s aimed at West Germany, the death squads preying on San Salvador and truck bombers loose in Beirut. Dylan did a difficult thing: On *Infidels*, one of his harshest albums, which was released that year, he told the truth:

*Democracy don't rule the world  
Get that through your head  
This world is ruled by violence  
But I guess that's better left unsaid.*

In concert at Wolf Trap, he recast **Shelter From the Storm** as a double-time rock yelp, reinvesting a plaintive song with urgency:

*I've heard newborn babies  
wailing like a mourning dove  
And old men with broken teeth  
Stranded without love.*

The drummer went off, and the band played unplugged. Was it just my inside-the-Beltway imagination running away with me, or were Dylan's lyrics a commentary on the mercenary culture of Washington? *All along the watchtower/ The princes kept their view. And: Something is happening here and you don't know what it is/ Do you, Mr. Jones?* It's a critique that is 30 years old and as fresh as the ink on Arafat and Rabin's agreement. And to a Dylanist, it's second nature.

What is a Dylanist? The term, as far as I know, was coined by Brian Morton in his 1989 novel *The Dylanist*. The heroine of the title is Sally Burke, a young kindergarten teacher who grows up liberal and disillusioned. The man who will become her lover pegs her at first sight: *You're a Dylanist... . You don't believe in causes. You only believe in feelings.* But Sally believes *Dylan has shown her how to make your life a work of art. She loved the way he remained fluid, reinventing himself endlessly, refusing to be trapped by other people's expectations.* Her resistance to politics is rooted not in emotional self-absorption but in the modernist notion that, in the 20th century, art is the only viable religion.

But the priority of personal feelings over political causes as the definition of Dylanism is too simplistic. "Feelings" evokes that NutraSweet song from the '70s, a feel-good therapeutic mentality, a weightless belief in the equality of all emotional truths, a certain indifference to public life. Yet there is no sterner judge of the cult of feelings than Dylan himself. **License to Kill**, originally from *Infidels* and covered delicately by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers on the "Bobfest" record, is about a dangerous young man who *worships at the altar of a stagnant pool And when he sees his reflection he's fulfilled.* This post-modern menace has "feelings" all right - a clot of media cliches that serve only to obscure the reality of human nature: *Man is opposed to fair play/ He wants it all and he wants it his way.*

The Dylanist, if not necessarily a political progressive, is willing to confront the sorry state of America. In **Blind Willie McTell**, one of Dylan's most moving and least heard ballads (recorded in 1983), the United States is a land condemned by its racial past to a corrupt present where *Power and greed and corruptible seed/ Seem to be all that there is.*

At the same time, no one knows better than the Dylanist that negativity won't see you through. What makes Dylan's sensibility unique is that dire sermons on the state of the world and bitter denunciations of former lovers co-exist with timeless melodies, delightful nonsense and a constant undertow of yearning propelled by an inexhaustible belief in love.

It's this mixture, I suspect, that accounts for Dylan's continuing appeal to teenagers. I went to a family funeral recently where a 17-year-old from Omaha held himself aloof from the proceedings-until he heard the grown-ups listening to Dylan. We were pronounced "cool," and he joined the family. It's the mixture that attracted diverse artists to Madison Square Garden last year, and brought the crowds to Wolf Trap.

At concert's end, Dylan came out for an encore and wandered into the lovely melody of **Shooting Star**. I was in tears over private regrets until he sang the bridge of the song:

*Listen to the engine  
Listen to the bell  
To the last fire truck from Hell  
Go rolling by  
All good people are free.*

It was like I'd been gently slapped by Uncle Bob, reminding me that you're not a prisoner of sorrow. I'd listened to the song a hundred times and never really heard that line: *All good people are free*.

As Luther and I stood up to go, the house lights went on and Jimi Hendrix's **The Wind Cried Mary** came over the loudspeakers. Jimi was a contemporary of Dylan's, a guitarist with a comparable musical genius, a shooting star who slipped away 23 years ago. Dylan is still around, our most honorable survivor.

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## ER, DON'T THINK TWICE, IT'S NOT ALRIGHT

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**Sacramento Bee** (SB) - SUNDAY, October 10, 1993

By: David Barton Bee Pop Music Critic

Edition: METRO FINAL Section: SCENE Page: D3

The past ain't what it used to be - and neither are its stars. Or at least two of them. And as painful proof, there was Friday night's "historic" show by Bob Dylan and Carlos Santana at the Cal Expo Amphitheatre.

That these two stars of the '60s and '70s lack the popularity they once enjoyed is undeniable: Even sharing a bill, they drew 6,000, not half of the amphitheatre's capacity of 14,400.

But that's not news. The question was, would they deliver? No, the question was, would Dylan deliver? Santana, after all, has remained fairly consistent over the years. Not particularly interesting, but consistent. In fact, his opening set (Santana and Dylan alternate headline spots, and advertised openers the Wailing Souls didn't show) was a virtual copy of his show in the same venue last August.

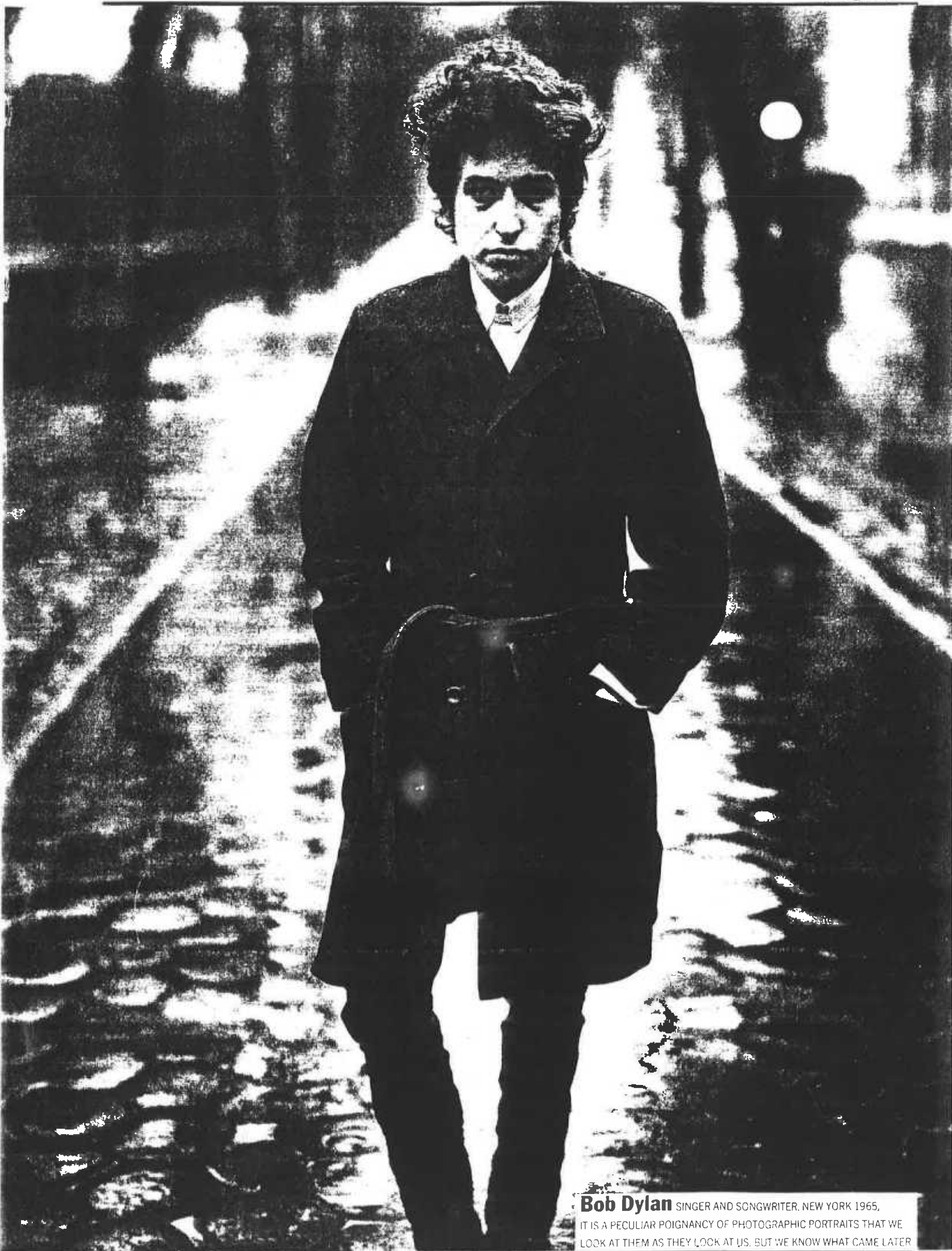
Dylan, of course, doesn't lack for good material. The writer of **Mr. Tambourine Man**, **If Not For You** and **Don't Think Twice (It's Alright)** (all of which he performed Friday) has one of the strongest catalogs in rock. The question is always, what will he do with them?

The answer last time Dylan played the amphitheatre, in 1988, was: Not much. Dylan left the stage after 55 desultory minutes, without a word, and drew a reportedly blistering reprimand from promoter (and friend) Bill Graham.

In contrast to that fiasco, Friday's show was a relative triumph. Dylan and his four-man band played for 100 minutes, and there were moments when the band kicked in and Dylan seemed to be paying attention.

The standout came late in the 13-song set, when he essayed the relatively obscure latter-day song **I and I**, the band (a second guitar, pedal steel guitar, bass and drums) locked onto the dark, brooding groove and did a credible imitation of Neil Young and Crazy Horse. But too often, the performances just sat there. Dylan has played these songs hundreds, perhaps thousands, of times, and it shows. Although he did a country remake of **Watching the River Flow**, most of the songs got the same sort of tossed-off, meterless reading for which Dylan has become notorious.

It's odd. Dylan is known for following his own muse and not pandering to audience expectations, but in Sacramento shows he has stuck with a small collection of established songs, songs he sounds bored with. He doesn't sound uncompromising, he sounds uninterested and unrehearsed. Much of the audience was having none of it Friday, and a steady stream of people left the amphitheatre until Dylan was left to perform his encore for fewer than half the listeners he started with.



**Bob Dylan** SINGER AND SONGWRITER, NEW YORK 1965,  
IT IS A PECULIAR POIGNANCY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS THAT WE  
LOOK AT THEM AS THEY LOOK AT US. BUT WE KNOW WHAT CAME LATER

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**OCT 3RD BOSTON HERALD, FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, BEVERLY HILLS, CA.**


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Forget the tributes, drop the hero worship: Bob Dylan just wants to be known as a working musician. *It's all about a livelihood...It's all about going out and playing*, he said, his blue eyes sparkling. *That's what every musician who ever crossed my path strives for.* Yes, but Bob Dylan isn't just the Average Joe musician. He strolls into a small, stuffy room at his manager's office, wearing jeans and cowboy boots topped off with a black Australian cowboy hat. He sits down in a chair, leans back, and plucks the hat off his head, propping it on his knee where it rests for nearly an hour. Dylan, who rarely gives interviews, is clearly uncomfortable at first, not divulging much and giving terse replies. But it doesn't take long for him to shed his elusive facade, exhibiting annoyance at today's music, bashfulness about his own achievements and fervor about taking his guitar and harmonica on the road again. *To me it's a dream come true*, he says. *What could be bad about traveling places, seeing different things, moving? It keeps you alive.* In his latest North American tour, he's paired up with old pal Carlos Santana, allowing concertgoers to hear the contrasting sounds of Dylan's folksy rock music with Satana's fusion of Latin American, African, and blues rhythms.

It was Dylan who inspired Santana back in the 1960s with such classics as **Blowin' in the Wind** and **Like a Rolling Stone** - songs that helped bring social consciousness to rock 'n roll. *Life to me is like light and you're the projector, man. If you don't like what you're showing, just change the light. He (Dylan) made me aware of that*, Santana said. *With most bands, as soon as you unplug the amplifier, it's over. Not with his music, not with my music. When people go home, men or women, they feel pregnant with his consciousness. And they go home and they want to cook something delicious or they want to write poetry because it's very infectious.* As Dylan hears all this coming from his friend seated on a nearby couch, he stares off into the corner as if he's not listening. When asked about the adulation, he says simply: *Well, my feelings are the same about Carlos' music. It's great to be supported by your fellow musicians.* At 52, Dylan's stature as rock 'n roll sage is perhaps only rivaled by the late John Lennon. Although he has inspired everything from a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award to an obsessed fan sifting through his garbage, he tries not to think about it. *It's important to be impervious to all that stuff*, he said. *Maybe if my shows weren't continuing year after year it would give me some sense of satisfaction.*

Dylan has carried his music through three decades of constant change, but he's not real happy about how the music industry has evolved. *Music can save people, but it can't in the commercial way it's being used. It's just too much. It's pollution*, he said. *Have you ever been in the city, walking down the street, and the car comes down the street, 'Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom.' It's like a 'Jaws' movie or something. It's frightening. You know it is*, he says, mimicking the beat of a rap song. *'Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom.'* *You want to take a machine gun and blast it off the street.*

He uses an analogy of two very different German composers to explain the difference between his music and the songs that jam the radio waves. *My feeling is that the guy who's taken up modern music is what you hear in Wagner*, Dylan said. *Wagner, to me, is like one of the archcriminals of all time. Like Beethoven would be the antithesis of Wagner, and Beethoven you didn't hear very much. Wagner makes you feel gloomy and depressed, but he's popular too, and he dictates the music of the day whether you like it or not*, Dylan said. Though Beethoven didn't start his career playing in coffee houses, he and Dylan share the same romantic view of music. *Music is what saved me in this world. It gave me something to do when others around me were just doing stuff which didn't interest me. My heart wasn't into any of that other stuff. The music grabbed me. It just grabbed my heart, you know. And it's been important not to trample on that and not to explore it and not let others make something out of it what they would prefer to make it.*

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**BOB DYLAN: JUST AN OPENING ACT**


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From the **San Francisco Chronicle** 9/10/93. (This is a review of the Concord 7/10/93 show)

*Lengthy ballads set the stage for headliner Santana*

By Joel Selvin, Chronicle Staff Critic

Even though he played for more than 90 minutes, Bob Dylan seemed like little more than an extra added attraction to the Santana show on Thursday at the Concord Pavilion.

Once, Dylan reigned over the rock world as the indisputable figure at its summit. Now reduced to opening shows by the somewhat tiresome Latin group whose contributions to rock don't amount to a thimbleful next to Dylan's, the great songwriter ground out a relatively cursory and, in the context, mysterious performance.

Backed by the tightly orchestrated four-piece band, Dylan performed the long version of every song he sang, filling the breaks between verses with double choruses of unenlightening playing by former Sweethearts of the



Rodeo guitarist John Jackson. Dylan weakly warbled his way through a 15-minute rendition of **Desolation Row**, confusing some verses and apparently improvising some lines on the spot.

He snarled out a crunching **Everything Is Broken** and turned **It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry** into a loping blues shuffle. He then opened a rattling, clattering unplugged section with **Blackjack Davey**, from his most recent album, a vaguely satisfying portion of the program that rode over the rough moments, although he undermined whatever momentum he had gained with the everlasting **Desolation Row**.

But when he brought the performance to a climax with an all-but-unintelligible **I and I** and a flaccid **Maggie's Farm**, followed by a half-hearted, pointless **Rainy Day Women** encore, Dylan lost any semblance of drama or focus. His set just withered and wafted away rather than slamming to a close.

## (FROM REUTERS:) A TALK WITH BOB DYLAN - GARY HILL

SAN DIEGO, Cal - *America gives a free license to destroy yourself at an early age*, Bob Dylan says. *But what my eyes see and what my ears hear is that all the young people aren't going for that.* Still a moral critic and crusader after all these years, Dylan hopes his new album, to be released Oct 29, will nourish those who, like him, say they're exposed to a lot of bad music and bad values nowadays. Young people are hungering for the truth-telling roots music on **World Gone Wrong**, Dylan says, and it's not nostalgia for the '60s that attracts them to his concerts.

*People who come to see me play, they don't know nothing about Like a Rolling Stone or Vietnam. They don't know nothing about the 'British Invasion', he says. Half of them never heard of David Bowie. Yet they find something in seeing me play, night after night. That is very encouraging for me. Because if it wasn't for seeing them - man, you would probably find me in some kind of Hard Rock Cafe, hanging out and greeting people or something.*

Dylan says pop radio no longer plays music he cares about. *Even in the '60s, to use such a deplorable term, really, you could turn on the radio and hear Otis Redding or Wilson Pickett or Percy Sledge or Solomon Burke. These people were making popular records. Well, that's no more.* Similarly, he says, country music singers then were close enough to the "hillbilly" originators to be fresh and vital. *They were just one step removed from the early ones, and you could hear that. But you can't hear it anymore, it's so polluted and unclear. And there are a lot of young kids that know they don't want that. Even World Gone Wrong is a step or 2 removed*, Dylan says. *People should go to those old records and find out what the real thing is, because mine is still 2d generation. My version of Broke Down Engine is maybe 3d generation from Blind Willie's version of it.* He doesn't buy the idea that popular music should be from the street. *The street-there's taxicabs, gas fumes, and buses and bank robberies and what have you, all in a single second on a street corner, with jackhammers going, and that is supposedly the art of mirroring society. Well, that's not my belief.* Says Dylan: *Art to me doesn't mirror society. The very essence of art is subversive to society, and whatever society is putting out, art's got to do something else.*

The "seductive meditational values" of rural life are the source of the folk blues and ballads he values most. *My belief is that it comes greatly across with land. Just to be in a rural landscape gives you a better understanding of what this kind of music is all about.* Dylan also has a workingman's distaste for many current music stars, saying they can't sing or play but get by on personality and electronic gimmickry. *When they electrified the guitar, he says, that's as far as it needed to go. He adds, It's not fun and games for me to play. Everyone has something that they can do very well, and my particular thing is that.* He emphasizes that some of the originators of "that real feeling of rock 'n' roll" are still around. *Carl Perkins is still around. These people are the real thing. They're here now. They still are on Earth.* Somehow, he says, *Like it or not, rock and roll is linked with sex and drugs, but why? Little Richard didn't take any drugs. Carl Perkins was a happily married man. And they made the greatest rock and roll ever.* The idea of the flamboyant Little Richard on drugs cracks him up. *I don't think he needed any drugs*, Dylan says, chuckling and then laughing long and loud. *That's funny, Little Richard on drugs, God forbid.*

Dylan, who prefers not to pin down his personal brand of religion, is glad "God was still in the schools" in his youth. *A person who only believes in himself is doomed*, says Dylan. *A person without faith is like a walking corpse. And now people have to fight to get the faith back, especially in schools.* He says his religious education gave him a moral base. *It was easy to rebel against the hypocrisy you saw in other areas because of that footing you had to stand on. If you didn't have that footing, you'd just go for the rest of it - which is kind of what's happening now. People are lost because they can believe anything.* Dylan predicts: *Elvis is going to be a religion. My first trip to Graceland was about 6 years ago, and it was just awesome, and it was very clear that Elvis was going to be a religion in a lot of different ways.*

In some classic enigmatic Dylan humor, he explained, *First of all, El-vis in Hebrew means God, El is God in Hebrew. And Elvis is just a reiteration of the tribe of Levi. And anybody who wears jeans is a Hebrew.*

*'Also, anybody who wears a baseball cap backwards - that's a yarmulke (Jewish skullcap). That's heavy, huh? he said with a laugh. The world operates on principles that we know nothing of.*

### (FROM REUTERS:) DYLAN'S NEW ALBUM: HIS COMMENTS AND AN EVALUATION.

SAN DIEGO, Cal-Bob Dylan's new album is a passionate solo performance of 10 superb, little-known songs from the rural blues and ballad traditions that birthed his world-changing songwriting career. But the songs on **World Gone Wrong** are no moldy oldies dug out for dry historical reasons. *They're current*, says Dylan. *All these songs are personal, but they're very universal...in encompassing all of the world. That's what makes them deep songs.*

**World Gone Wrong** is quintessential Dylan, the singing and guitar-playing as fine as any he has ever recorded. *These are just as good as it's possible for me to play them*, says the 52-year-old Dylan, who hoisted popular music into the realms of social activism and art. His 30-year career was celebrated in a concert last year by superstars ranging across the eras from George Harrison to Pearl Jam. The songs on **World Gone Wrong** take time and attention to appreciate. Lines emerge, haunting and hilarious by turns, as the listener figures out who is speaking, what is going on.

*[The lyrics] aren't immediately understandable*, says Dylan says, *because people's minds are so polluted with buying products. They're not understandable because people are tied up making important decisions on whether to buy a Coke or a Pepsi.* The songs form a kind of emotional and moral arc from the title-tune opener (*Sorry, honey, I can't be good, the world's gone wrong*, he summarizes with a laugh) to the spiritual serenity of a **Lone Pilgrim** in the face of death. On an album intensely involved with moral issues, these songs do not romanticize

the gamblers, murderers and "rounders" that populate them. **Stack-A-Lee** is an absurd, jeering tragedy, while **Delia** is a devastatingly sad mourning of a murdered woman who *loved all them rounders, never did love me*. **Love Henry** is a remarkable tale with an enigmatic final section in which a murderess tries to lure a parrot to her knee. *It opens up a door for another song*, Dylan says. *That's what my best songs do. In the last couple of lines it might just open up a door for another song.*

In his liner notes, Dylan uses the songs as jumping-off points to riff on a series of moral confusions in modern life. He quotes from the title tune, *Strange things are happening like never before*, adding: *Strange things like courage becoming befuddled and nonfundamental.* But despite the apparent focus of the record, he says he had no formula in mind when choosing the songs. *It just seemed that these were the ones that kind of fit*, he says. *There's a wealth of this material around. This is just one record. There*



*could be a hundred. My next record could be all my songs. But this is where it begins for me.* Dylan feels he got a little sidetracked as a performer when, inspired by Woody Guthrie, he began writing songs-the anthems of change like **Blowin' in the Wind** and **Like a Rolling Stone** that energized a generation of social revolt.

*When my songwriting started, all that was kind of left to one side, the musician part of it was left for a while. But it was necessary for me to get back to the stuff that meant so much to me at one time*, he says. Repeatedly, Dylan lists his personal giants, the Blind Willy McTells and Charlie Pattons and many others. *These people who originated this music, they're all Shakespeares, you know? They're Thomas Edisons. Louis Pasteurs. They invented this type of thing. In a hundred years, they'll be notable for that.* He was privileged to sit at their feet when he was young. *The people who played that music were still around then, and so there was a bunch of us, me included, who got to see all these people close up-people like Son House, Reverend Gary Davis or Sleepy John Estes. Just to sit there and be up close and watch them play*, Dylan continues, *you could study what they were doing, plus a bit of their lives even rubbed off on you. Those vibes will carry into you forever, really, so it's like those people, they're still here to me. They're not ghosts of the past or anything. They're continually here.*

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## DYLAN THE FOLK HERO: *WORLD GONE WRONG* (COLUMBIA)

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**Newsday (ND)** - Sunday October 31, 1993

By: IRA ROBBINS. STAFF WRITER

Edition: NASSAU AND SUFFOLK

Section: FANFARE Page: 19

IT WASN'T MUCH of a revelation, five or six biographies ago, that Bob Dylan was never really an up-from-nothing rambling troubadour hobo folk music could easily recognize some of the melodies and romantic imagery on Dylan's still-stunning early records. With his unprecedented, sprawling imagination and courageous critical stance, Dylan had so much to say in the '60s that re-tooling extant musical ideas as a carrier for his own streaming thought dreams was not only efficient, it flowed honorably from folk tradition.



It's no insult to say that this immeasurably vast and abiding mountain on America's cultural landscape is no longer tapping the same deep well of magical songwriting ideas he did 30 years ago. No one really expects another **Subterranean Homesick Blues**, **My Back Pages** or **Forever Young** to spring from his notebook. Fortunately, the uncanny vision that has always served him so well has led Dylan back up the winding road of his 30-odd-album-career to traditional folk music, performed the same way he came into this world, alone, with one acoustic guitar - the one realm where he can be a vital and profound artist for as long as he cares to make records.

*World Gone Wrong* follows the gentle boot-heels of last year's *Good as I Been to You* - another spartan production of blues and ballads, chosen with Dylan's expert knowledge from such folk sources as the Mississippi Sheiks, Blind Willie McTell, Doc Watson and Tom Paley. Playing agile guitar and singing in a pinched, nasal whine that transcends any objective critical standards - deserving of judgment only for its unmistakable humanity - he creates a powerfully moving aura of somber weight that is anything but oppressive. Where the relaxed feel of *Good as I Been to You* suggested an avuncular presence singing tunes around the kitchen table, *World Gone Wrong* has a quiet, insular intensity that hastens up a vision of late-night studio solitude, where a lonely man pours his gasoline-soaked heart into the emotional fire of these rustic songs.

*technology to wipe out the truth is now available*, writes Dylan in the album's surprisingly forthright (if obscurely punctuated) annotation. *there wont be songs like these anymore. factually there arent any now*. So his readings of these sturdy carriers of tragedy, despair and desire take on a certain desperate import. And he gives them their due, finding airy melodic allure in the murderous **Love Henry**, making real the hopeless misery and dreams of **Ragged & Dirty**, sculpting a deathly sadness in **Delia**, adding a malevolent edge to the amorous enthusiasm of **Blood in My Eyes**. Despite the absence of Dylan-penned songs, *World Gone Wrong* is no less personal an album than any Dylan has made in years. Combining a profound connection to his own songwriting and performances that go beyond mere interpretation, the record expresses as much about Bob Dylan's art as any collection of originals.

### WORLD GONE WRONG: BOB DYLAN (COLUMBIA 57590)

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Source: US Newspaper No other details available.

In some ways, the most interesting thing about Bob Dylan's *World Gone Wrong* isn't the way he recasts folk classics like **Two Soldiers** and **Delia**, but the way he describes the songs in his liner notes. After all, it's one thing to hear him stomp through the ragtime rhythms of **Stack-a-Lee**, something else entirely to read that *Stack is not some egotistical degraded existentialist dionysian idiot*, and that *the Authentic alternative lifestyle [is] the Agrarian one*. And while few of the performances here are as revelatory or inspired as those, say, on *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, they're closer than Dylan has come in a long time.

### WORLD GONE WRONG IS DYLAN GONE RIGHT

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**Boston Globe** (BG) - SUNDAY, October 24, 1993

By: Steve Morse, Globe Staff

Edition: THIRD Section: ARTS AND FILM Page: B31

Bob Dylan is through competing with the Nirvanas and Pearl Jams of the world. He's never going to see his face splattered on MTV, and he doesn't care. Dylan has simply walked away from the struggle to remain hip and visionary. He took his bow in the spotlight last year with his 30th-anniversary tribute at Madison Square Garden, attended by old and new disciples from Eric Clapton and Neil Young to Pearl Jam. Since then, he's retreated back to obscure tours and oddball records in which he sings traditional folk songs rather than writing new material.

**World Gone Wrong**, due out Tuesday, is his second straight disc of traditional folk songs performed on solo acoustic guitar and occasional mouth harp. Although he still tours with an electric band (as when co-billed with Santana this summer at Great Woods), his latest records return full circle to his '60s days in Greenwich Village coffeehouses. Dylan is in cranky yet still crafty retreat from the real world. His use of traditional songs - murder ballads, down-and-out laments and epic tales of war, gambling and love - allows him to comment allegorically on current affairs. But they lack the grand political statements of his self-penned *Infidels* album of 1983, or the sweeping religious sentiments of his *Slow Train Coming* and *Saved* albums in 1979 and 1980, not to mention his glory days before that. In short, Dylan is no longer a walking myth factory.

But he is still capable of great music. That was evident from his surprisingly strong show at Great Woods this summer (his best in years), as it is from the new **World Gone Wrong**, which is far better than last year's disc of traditional songs, *Good As I Been to You*.

The improvement lies in his voice - still raspy, but more malleable than last year's empty husk - and in his emotional commitment. Dylan sparkles on the folk-bluesy **Blood in My Eyes** (about timeless sexual lust: "Hey babe, I've got blood in my eyes for you") and on the title track, **World Gone Wrong**, a bluesy number with the verse: *I can't be good no more . . . because the world gone wrong*. Both songs were learned from versions by the Mississippi Sheiks, he says in rare liner notes accompanying the record.

In these notes, Dylan expatiates on each song in stream-of-consciousness, Beat-poet fashion. He says the title track is about *evil charlatans masquerading in pullover vests & tuxedos talking gobbledygook, monstrous pompous superficial pageantry parading down lonely streets on limited access highways*. OK, we don't know what he's talking about either, but he hasn't lost his touch.

Like his idol, Woody Guthrie, Dylan retains an enormous sympathy for the disenfranchised. Just listen to **Ragged & Dirty** (*I'm broke, hungry, ragged and dirty, too*) and **Broke Down Engine**, a Willie McTell tune with the verse: *Been shooting craps and gambling and mama, I done got broke*. Dylan also scars the soul with the reflective, anti-war **Two Soldiers** (which he says was given him by Jerry Garcia); the murder ballad **Love Henry** (about a woman who kills her man); plus the briskly played standard **Stack A Lee** and the yearning **Lone Pilgrim**, a poignant gospel tune learned from a Doc Watson record. *The same hand that led me through scenes most severe, has kindly assisted me home*, Dylan sings, closing out this disarmingly sparse but affecting album.

Dylan's witty liner notes also clear up some misconceptions. He declares that his so-called **Never Ending Tour** actually ended in 1991, when guitarist G. E. Smith left his band. Since then, Dylan says, there's been *The Money Never Runs Out Tour* (fall of '91); *Southern Sympathizer Tour* (early '92); *Why Do You Look at Me So Strangely Tour* (Europe '92); *One Sad Cry of Pity Tour* (Australia and West Coast America '92); *Principles of Action Tour* (Mexico-South America '92); *Outburst of Consciousness Tour* ('92); and *Don't Let Your Deal Go Down Tour* ('93).

And what's next? With Dylan, one can only guess.

## WORLD GONE WRONG

**Marin Independent Journal**, Oct 31. 1 993

No other details available.

On October 24, 1931, four black string-band musicians called the Mississippi Sheiks travelled to Atlanta to start a two-day recording session that yielded, among a dozen other tracks, a double-sided record of **I've Got Blood In My Eyes For You** (Incl. **The World Is Going Wrong**). When Columbia released the record nine months later into the Depression-crippled market, only 350 copies were pressed. But today 62 years later, those two songs have made their way to Bob Dylan, who was sufficiently fascinated that he made them philosophical centers for

his second album of traditional songs accompanied only by guitar and a little harmonica. If this record is short on any element, it is humor. Dylan takes the record's title very seriously-it's no accident he changed the song from **The World Is Going Wrong** to **World Gone Wrong**, suggesting a fait accompli.

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## WORLD GONE WRONG, BOB DYLAN, COLUMBIA RECORDS.

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by: Elgin Jeffries, *Pioneer Press*  
No other details available.

Leave it to Dylan...At a time when Bob Dylan's song-writing genius is being celebrated and his 30-years as a recording artist are being marked, folk-rock's poet laureate releases a pair of homages to other people's songs.

**World Gone Wrong** is a sequel to last year's **Good As I Been To You**, and the bookend albums, both featuring Dylan alone on guitar and harmonica, pay loving tribute to the folk music that was his early inspiration. Included here are more familiar songs including **Stack-A-Lee**, Blind Willie McTell's **Delia** and **Jack-a-Roe**, as well as lesser known but no less captivating performances of **Blood In My Eyes**, **Broke Down Engine** and the title track.

As both producer and performer, Dylan presents the songs in starkly unadorned fashion. These are plain tales told from an eerily wind-blown wilderness with an intimacy known only to the most gifted of storytellers. Dylan's guitar playing is sure, and his singing is relaxed and easy. He has eschewed the usual high-pitched, nasal wailing, and has instead moved his hushed, husky growl closer to the microphone.

What results is proof that, after 30 years of walking down that *long, lonesome road*, Dylan can still offer an album with plenty of blood on the tracks.

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## RECORD RACK: IN BRIEF

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**Los Angeles Times** (LT) - Sunday October 31, 1993  
Bob Dylan, **World Gone Wrong**, Columbia. By: Chris Willman  
Edition: Home Edition Section: Calendar Page: 61

Casual fans will be mystified and true ornery Dylanologists delighted by the troubadour's second consecutive foray into traditional folk songs, traditionally rendered. This one's completely of a piece with last year's **Good as I Been to You**, with more acoustic murder and mayhem borrowed from the bluesy side of the public domain. The only new wrinkle is liner notes from Dylan himself, a stream of consciousness of a kind not seen since the days of **Tarantula**.

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## BOB DYLAN'S LATEST IS WORTH A LISTEN

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Source: US Newspaper  
by: Paula Yoo  
No other details available.

Where does an album like Bob Dylan's **World Gone Wrong** fit into today's frenzied world of morphing, multimedia sensory overload?

The subtle solo acoustic performances from Dylan's 40th album seem like rusty relics, yet there's a fresh reason for these songs.

In **World Gone Wrong**, due out Tuesday, Dylan reinterprets ten classic gems from folk and blues traditions (by such artists as Willie McTell and the Mississippi Sheiks) through '90s lenses. There are no original songs penned by Dylan here- only covers of the originals lost or obscured by history. The songs' simple, rural melodies and plaintive lyrics slowly grow on you, and soon you realize and appreciate Dylan's intricate guitar virtuosity.

Dylan also wrote the liner notes for the album-a rare glimpse of the singer's thoughts on what these songs mean to him, adding an extra layer and dimension to the songs. In the title song, **World Gone Wrong**, Dylan sings

with wry irony, *Sorry, honey, I can't be good, the world's gone wrong... Strange things are happening like never before....* The world's always gone wrong with every blues tune, but Dylan updates the song with his liner notes's interpretation:

*World Gone Wrong goes against cultural policy... strange things alright-strange things like courage becoming befuddled and nonfundamental, evil charlatans masquerading in pullover vests and tuxedos talking gobbledygook, monstrous pompous superficial pageantry parading down lonely streets on limited access highways.*

Didn't things seem lot simpler during his **Blowin' in the Wind** days?

Although the album stands on its own in quality, Dylan's status won't hurt the sales and hype. But if a lesser-known singer had done **World Gone Wrong**, the quiet and introspective album may have been lost in the shuffle of our society's sound-bitten flash and panache and inability to have the patience to really listen.

Dylan, who recently spoke with Reuters news service about the album, says the songs *aren't immediately understandable because people are tied up making important decisions whether to buy a Coke or a Pepsi*. But there are enough people out there willing to take the time to listen. In his liner notes, Dylan describes Willie McTell's **Broken Down Engine** as a song *about variations of the human longing-the low hum in meters and syllables-(the) dupes of commerce and politics colliding on tracks*.

If you can't hear the train rolling down the rails and the longing in the singer's voice, then you've been watching too much MTV. Get off the potato couch and rediscover the music.

## RECORDINGS: BOB DYLAN, IN HIS OWN WORDS.

*The Washington Post*, November 03, 1993, FINAL Edition

By: Mike Joyce, Special to *The Washington Post*

Section: STYLE, p. c07

What's on Bob Dylan's mind? Every new Dylan album begs the question, but the answer is often as elusive as the man himself. Which is why **World Gone Wrong** (Columbia) comes as something of a shock even before you play it. Inside the CD jacket is a thousand-word essay by Dylan titled *About the Songs (what they're about)*, a gust of rambling lowercase musings that instantly recalls the influence of Woody Guthrie.

In the essay Dylan not only explains how he came across the country blues and folk ballads that make up the album and what significance each holds for him, but he uses the songs to illustrate the world according to Bob, the *New Dark Ages* as he sees it, a world gone very, very wrong. Blind Willie McTell's **Broke Down Engine**, he notes, isn't merely *about variations of human longing, the low hum of meters and syllables*-which, as it turns out, is as good a description of Dylan's performances on **World Gone Wrong** as any-it's also about *dupes of commerce and politics colliding on tracks*. Nor is the title track, according to Dylan, merely a cover version of a tune first recorded in the '30s by the Mississippi Sheiks. More relevant than ever, the lyric *goes against cultural policy*, Dylan writes. He quotes the line *strange things are happening like never before*, then adds: *strange alright-strange things like courage becoming befuddled & nonfundamental. evil charlatans masquerading in pullover vests & tuxedos talking gobbledygook*.

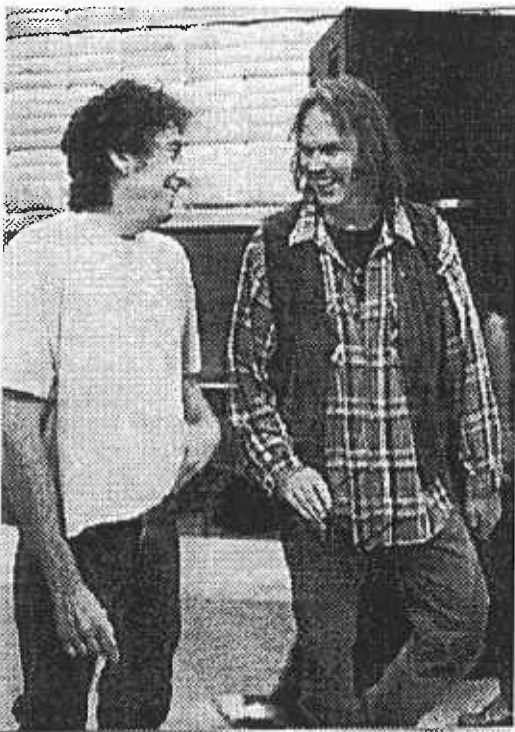
Given sentiments like these, small wonder **World Gone Wrong** turns out to be such a bleak and brooding affair. Unlike last year's **Good as I Been to You**, also a solo acoustic session devoted to traditional songs, **World Gone Wrong** is neither brightened by the whimsy of **Froggie Went a Courtin'** nor made more lyrical by the simple, bittersweet jazzy refrains of **Tomorrow Night**. In fact, save for a few glimmers of hope here and there, such as the comforting tone of **Lonesome Pilgrim**, the album's spiritual coda, the mood is as grim as can be.

Grim but emotionally powerful. In many ways **World Gone Wrong** ranks among Dylan's most soulful and personal recordings, a stark and honest reminder of the music that inspired him and others before *the insane world of entertainment exploded in our faces*. The highlights include a harmonica and guitar arrangement of **Stack a Lee** that conjures vivid memories of the days when Dylan recorded under the pseudonym Blind Boy Grunt (a surname he would eventually earn in spades), the familiar world-weary folk song **Delia** and a pair of intriguing narrative ballads: **Two Soldiers** (which Dylan learned from Jerry Garcia) and Tom Paley's **Jack-a-Roe**. Arguably the most moving performances, though, are **World Gone Wrong** and **Blood in My Eyes**, both recorded by the Sheiks but delivered by Dylan in a far more austere and despairing fashion.



**Judy Sings Dylan**

Of course, there are plenty of folks around who prefer not to hear Dylan sing his own songs, let alone those of others, especially when there are more pleasant and tuneful alternatives available, such as the latest release by Judy Collins, **Judy Sings Dylan** (Geffen). Spanning nearly 30 years and embracing both classic anthems (**Like a Rolling Stone**) and relatively obscure cuts (**Sweetheart Like You**), the album is as much a love letter to Dylan as Collins's liner notes, dedicated to *you with your wild hair and your thin bones and your silver tipped black boots, a figure of my imagination, a fact of my life. When I was at the edge, when death was at my door with his raven look and hour-glass, your words, like the point of a knife, cut to the bone of memory*. Much like Joan Baez and Odetta before her, Collins succeeds in placing her own stamp on Dylan's songs, though, inevitably, the more defiant and strident songs seem oddly genteel at times. The sheer beauty of Collins's soprano is such that it blunts the emotional intensity of **Like a Rolling Stone** and **It's All Over Now, Baby Blue**, but her voice later proves dreamily well suited to the introspective ballads **Simple Twist of Fate**, **I Believe in You** and, in particular, **Dark Eyes**, which boasts a lovely, impressionistic piano arrangement that briefly brings to mind Collins's flair for Sondheim. And while the arrangements neatly integrate folk, pop, country and classical elements, the album's most stirring cut finds Collins singing **With God on Our Side** a cappella.

**'The 30th Anniversary Celebration'**

Recorded at Madison Square Garden in October 1992, **Bob Dylan: The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration** (Columbia) is a double-CD homage to the songwriter by a sizable circle of friends. Neil Young, who dubbed it Bobfest, was among several performers who made sure the evening was one of celebration, not deification, with appropriately freewheeling versions of **Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues** and **All Along the Watchtower**.

None of the other three dozen headliners rocks with Young's gleeful abandon, save for perhaps Johnny Winter (on **Highway 61 Revisited**), but there's no shortage of impressive Dylan readings, including Eric Clapton's bold and bluesy recasting of **Don't Think Twice (It's All Right)**, Roger McGuinn's glorious reprise of Mr. Tambourine Man, Eddie Vedder and Mike McCready's impassioned **Masters of War** and the O'Jays' marvelous gospel rendering of **Emotionally Yours**.

Although there are some lackluster and rather tuneless performances as well, notably by Johnny Cash and June Carter (on **It Ain't Me Babe**) and George Harrison (on **Absolutely Sweet Marie**), right up to the end and Dylan's own simple and affecting version of **Girl From the North Country**, Bobfest nearly always lives up to its billing.

**'NEW' DYLAN RETURNS TO HIS EARLY ROOTS**

**Star Tribune** - Sunday, October 24, 1993

By: Rick Mason

Edition: **Metro Edition** Section: ENTERTAINMENT Page: 03F

Although wildly erratic in what sometimes seems his artistic dotage, Bob Dylan still has an admirable penchant for defying expectations. Thus the abrupt return to his earliest roots on last year's **Good As I Been to You** and on **World Gone Wrong**, his new Columbia album, due in stores Tuesday. Featuring only his own vocals, acoustic guitar and harmonica, both albums show Dylan resurrecting himself as a compelling interpreter of traditional folk and blues. Last year's effort was only a qualified success because his straining vocals were often painful to endure. His voice is more assured and expressive on the new album, able to etch nuances of emotion instead of seemingly struggling to utter anything at all. Willie McTell's **Broke Down Engine** crackles with urgency and desperation while Dylan's unusually vivid guitar drives the tune. A palpable mix of world-weariness, lust and menace permeates **Blood in My Eyes** and the sadness of **Delia** is strikingly brittle. These familiar and obscure nuggets depict an ugly swath of deceit, murder and mayhem. Dylan's rage-against-the-world liner notes, which actually reveal more about himself than the tunes, indicate he considers them morality plays. Dylan always has been something of a spiritual revivalist, but by returning to his roots, his chief concern may be his own revival.

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ROCK: DYLAN MAKES THE OLD NEW AGAIN

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*Detroit Free Press* (FP) - MONDAY October 25, 1993

By: GARY GRAFF; MIKE FLOYD

Edition: Metro Final Section: FTR Page: 3E

Last year, Dylan began a reclamation project. His 1992 album, *Good As I Been to You* took him back to his Greenwich Village folk club roots, with a batch of generations-old ballads and pure solo performances featuring Dylan accompanying himself on guitar and harmonica. He continues that tack on *World Gone Wrong*, his 40th album, and comes up with an even richer and more focused effort. The album's 10 songs -- drawn from the songbooks of Blind Willie McTell, Tom Paley, the Mississippi Sheiks, Doc Watson -- are moral parables, united by Dylan in a rumination on contemporary values. Technology to wipe out truth is now available, he writes in *World Gone Wrong's* liner notes. When the cost comes down, look out! There won't be songs like these anymore. But Dylan preserves them in raw, stripped-down versions, capturing the rural, meditative qualities that make them vibrant. *Love Henry*, *Blood in My Eyes*, *Delia* -- these are stories about unrequited lovers, murderers, gamblers, sinners and the occasional saint. Dylan cuts to the core of each; his *Stack A Lee*, for instance, is a dark tale of revenge and inevitability, not the cheerful outlaw fable of so many renditions of *Stagger Lee*. And when he sings Strange things are happening like never before in the title track, it's clear Dylan isn't just referring to some long lost period in time. An uncomfortable icon and anthemist, Dylan has become an enthusiastic preservationist whose efforts are quite contemporary.



I have referred elsewhere to the Dylan Computer Digest called *Highway 61*. I offer a few glimpses of what can be found there, on the next two pages:

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## DAVID TODD: BLACK JACK DAVEY VERSIONS

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It seems Bob is doing his perspective shift thing (a la Tangled) with the current renderings of **Black Jack Davey**. Here are transcriptions of the last verse from the first four versions:

5 sept 93

*Last night she slept in a feather bed  
Between her husband and baby  
Tonight she's on the cold, cold ground  
In the arms of Black Jack Davy.  
Love my Black Jack Davy.*

8 sept 93

*Last night she slept on a cold cold ground  
Between her husband and baby  
Tonight he'll sleep in the cold, cold ground  
In the arms of Black Jack Davy.  
Love my Black Jack Davy.*

9 sept 93

*Each night I slept in a feather bed  
Between my husband and baby  
Tonight I'll lay in the cold, cold ground  
In the arms of Black Jack Davy.  
Love my Black Jack Davy.*

10 sept 93

*Last night I slept in a cold cold ground  
Beneath my husband and baby  
Tonight I'll sleep in the cold, cold ground  
In the arms of Black Jack Davy.  
Love my Black Jack Davy.*

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## SUBJECT: HE WANTS TO RIDE HIS BICYCLE.

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Reply-To: [jmg1@hydra.unm.edu](mailto:jmg1@hydra.unm.edu)

My wife and I had tickets to see Mr. Dylan last spring here in Nashville. We just got our taxes done and realized we were screwed by Uncle Sam. My wife comes back from the store and runs in the house yelling: Dylan's riding his bike down our street!! We run out the front door and there he is on a mountain bike with a big jive cap on and a beautiful blonde riding along with him. He sees us running toward him and turns around--going up our back alleyway. We run out back and catch him again. He turns across the street and back the way he had come. We still needed full confirmation of the Dylan-sighting and jumped in the car and followed them on their bikes until I finally got a full frontal face view and was sure--yes it was Bob. The show that night was a killer. I think his voice, phrasing, etc. is cooler now than it was back in the rock and roll days. We just moved to Nashville and the music fans here suck--we were the only people dancing at the aforementioned Bob-show. If I were Dylan I would not play here again--but I sure hope he comes along our way again soon.

**SUBJECT: BILLBOARD ON DYLAN AD**

From: yudel@well.sf.ca.us (Larry Yudelson)

**Bob Dylan Proves The Times Are Changin' Again**

By Eric Boehlert, Billboard 22/1/94

Sink like a stone: For those who missed the 60-second spot during the Orange Bowl on New Year's Day, tune in to CBS following President Clinton's Jan. 25 State of the Union address and see one of the most suprising commercials of this, or any year.

Coopers & Lybrand, the normally low-profile Big Six accounting firm, is in the midst of a \$10 million ad blitz, overseen by Boston's Hill Holiday Connors & Cosmopolos advertising firm. As part of the campaign, Hill Holiday has created a handful of conventional spots that run during the Sunday morning political roundtable programs, along with some Wall Street Journal business-to-business spreads. But one part of the campaign, the Orange Bowl/State of the Union commerical, is a gorgeous image spot with no words, just inspiring pictures and music. That music consists of Richie Havens singing the opening verse of Bob Dylan's **The Times They Are A-Changin'**.

The fact that Dylan, who has long opposed such commercialization, would sell one of his songs for commerical purposes is historic. That he would sell his cornerstone protest anthem to an accounting firm is amazing. *I'm shocked,* says Bob Spitz, author of **Dylan: A Biography**. *It's not like he needs the money... I'm stunned.* Spitz points out that Dylan is so sensitive about his music being used for commerical purposes that he has a clause in his contract that gives him final say over any requests.

How did Hill Holiday get permission for the song? Well, it asked. Agency president Fred Bertino reports that while researching what Coopers & Lybrand meant in the business community, the word *change* kept coming up. **The Times They Are A-Changin'** quickly topped the agency's wish list of possible songs, ahead of Paul Simon's **Boy in the Bubble** and David Bowie's **Changes**. Bertino admits that he never thought he'd get the Dylan song. *We got lucky.* After negotiating for two months, the agency and Dylan's management hammered out an agreement.

Part of that plan, besides a hefty undisclosed sum, blocks Hill Holiday from using Dylan's name, even when discussing the commercial. (Around the Boston ad firm, Dylan is known as "the composer," as in, "the composer of the song is sort of sensitive," as one exec put it.) "We bought the rights to the song, not the rights to talk about him," Bertino explains. Why did Dylan do it? Well that, like much that surrounds the enigmatic figure, remains a mystery. The artist's publisher and publicist were unavailable to discuss the subject.

This is the first time Dylan has ever allowed his words and music to be used for a commercial, according to Spitz. With the move, Dylan becomes the final figure of '60s rock superstardom to sell a song to advertisers, following the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Who, and the Beach Boys. It should be noted that Hill Holiday did a beautiful job incorporating the song into its pitch that business must change in order to thrive. (The ad consists of slow-motion, feel-good images of laboratory break-throughs, children's faces, and a bustling trading floor.)

Nevertheless, **The Times They Are A-Changin'** is perhaps the most important pop song of the protest era, even more so than the Beatles' **Revolution**, which followed Dylan's call to arms by four years, and the use of which in a Nike commerical years back created such an uproar. (Unlike Coopers & Lybrand, Nike welcomed the controversy surrounding **Revolution** and shrewdly used it to make its sneaker spot into a news event covered by all the networks.) As for fellow protest figure Richie Havens, who has made a career lately of recording commercials, his manager says Havens had no qualms about singing the song for an accounting firm.

**The service addresses, to which questions about the list itself and requests to be added to or deleted from it should be directed, are as follows:**

**Internet:**highway61-request@virginia.edu

**Bitnet:**hw61-req@virginia

**Uucp:**luunet!virginia!highway61-request

**You can send mail to the entire list (and rec.music.dylan) via one of these addresses:**

**Internet:**highway61@virginia.edu

**Bitnet:**hw61@virginia

**Uucp:**luunet!virginia!highway61

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**BOB DYLAN: 'WORLD GONE WRONG'**


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*Irish Times* 26 Nov 93

Sound & Vision (Disc Drive/Traditional): - Columbia, 474857 2 (44 mins)

By Nuala O'Connor

This is old-time music, but nostalgia it ain't. Here is Bob Dylan bringing it all back home (again), but this time with no future but Armageddon in mind. Voice, guitar, harmonica; this is traditional music, but as Dylan warns in the sleeve notes, *when the cost comes down look out! there won't be songs like these anymore, factually there aren't any now*. This is the second Dylan album in two years on which the song credits read 'all songs traditional'. So, with the pleasure of hearing great blues songs like Blind Willie McTell's **Broke Down Engine** and Appalachian ballads like **Love Henry** comes the accompanying pain of loss. **World Gone Wrong** shines a light in a time of darkness on the glorious treasure of American traditional music which never observed race lines. The desperadoes, bad men like **Stack A Lee**, the lovers **Delia** and **Love Henry** and the poor dead anti-heroes of **Two Soldiers** grew out of the great torrent of oral music streaming from the black and settler people of pre-corporate America. Reserving his unique lyric powers for the sleeve notes, Dylan lays these songs out uncompromisingly, with minimal but beautiful accompaniment.

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**OH, MAMA, COULD THIS REALLY BE THE END?**


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*The Times* 19 Nov 93

By David Sinclair

BOB DYLAN **World Gone Wrong** (Columbia 474857)

Tired, wizened, and so bereft of inspiration that he has had to resort once again to assembling a grab-bag of old folk tunes rather than write anything new of his own, Bob Dylan is clearly in a state of terminal artistic decline. Even so, he seems more engaged in his work on **World Gone Wrong** than he was on last year's lamentable **Good As I Been To You**. The sleeve notes, by Dylan himself, are a curious mixture of hard information about the various songs, and opaque 1960s hipster-speak. Among the more palatable efforts is the mournful country blues of **Ragged & Dirty One of the Willie Browns did this; schmaltz and pickled herring** and the lilting **Blood In My Eyes**, a song which sounds as if it might be a distant relation of **Corrina Corrina**. Although a lot of today's young guns profess to be playing their music only for themselves, jealously guarding their artistic 'integrity' from any taint of commerciality, only an old dog like Dylan could make an album so genuinely unheeding of market conditions (and lacking in contemporary relevance) as this. In that sense, perhaps, **World Gone Wrong** boasts a certain grim merit. These are the sort of songs that Dylan might have considered for inclusion on his very earliest albums, but at least they are anchored deep in the soil that nurtured his prodigious talent in the first place. It is still hard to excuse the wilful incompetence of the performances. His flat, croaky singing is accompanied by some shockingly duff guitar playing, and while a Dylan album without the fluffed notes would hardly be authentic, it is astounding, given the sophistication of modern studio technology, that a single acoustic guitar can be so badly recorded that it distorts. Well, astounding, that is, until a quick check of the credits reveals the legend: Produced by BOB DYLAN.

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**NEW RELEASES**


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*Independent On Sunday* Bob Dylan: **World Gone Wrong** (Columbia, all formats)

By Richard Williams

Say what you like about the end of the world, but it certainly brings the best out of Bob Dylan. He's decided that we're all going to hell in a hand-basket, and this is his soundtrack for the trip: an all-solo acoustic album of traditional songs whose mood veers from sombre to angry. Whereas last year's superficially similar **Good As I Been to You** showed the humour and cunning that beguiled Greenwich Village 30 years ago, **World Gone Wrong** avoids any such tricks of seduction. The voice is subdued, although still incomparably subtle, flicking in an instant from the regretful reverie of **Delia** to the edgy whine of **Stack-a-lee**, with many shades in between; behind it, the guitar renounces flashy finger-picking in favour of a bluntness that recalls the most direct of the great country bluesmen. His sources include Blind Willie McTell, the New Lost City Ramblers, Doc Watson and the Mississippi Sheiks, and he does them proud in a release that may turn out to stand with **Blood on the Tracks** and **Oh Mercy** as his best since the mid-Sixties. It isn't comfortable listening, but those who think it's Bob Dylan's job to cheer us up need their heads examining, not his.

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**THE ARTS: WALK RIGHT BACK - ROCK RECORDS**


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*The Daily Telegraph* 13 Nov 93

By Charles Shaar Murray

It is a rare artist who can consistently remain one step ahead of his or her history: perpetual growth is as unattainable an ideal for artists as it is for economies. The Beatles were spared the need for further reinvention because they broke up; more recently Madonna demonstrated the deadly dangers of running out of steam when velocity is your principal asset. This week, David Bowie and Bob Dylan, two past masters - no overt pun intended - of self-reinvention, turn and face the strain, releasing work which re-evaluates themselves, their guiding principles, and their respective places in a world grown both fearful of the future and mistrustful of its history.

Both men use their new albums to delve back into their pasts for the roots of their power, and both albums come complete with the kind of explicit statement of intent from which, as virtuosi of the allusive and elusive, Bowie and Dylan have always shied away. Bowie's soundtrack ... Dylan, by contrast, releases his second successive album of folk-blues standards performed entirely solo: the kind of work with which his recording career began, more than 30 years ago. Deeper and rougher than last year's *Good As I've Been to You*, it too explores issues of loyalty and morality, using songs from America's agrarian past as individual carriages in Dylan's train of thought. His guitar-playing continues to improve, his singing grows ever more eccentric and if, as some have suggested, his current dependence on traditional songs is a symptom of a compositional block, then it leaves no doubt that he can pick good songs even if he can no longer write them.

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**NON TRIER, NON EVENT**


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Source: *The Herald* 30 Oct 93

The Arts: Page T2

*Kenneth Wright reflects, with no great pleasure, on the rise and fall of a folk icon who appears to have given up the fight.*

I Blame the British motorcycle industry, myself. Suppose that on that fateful motorpsycho-nitemare day in Woodstock, late 1966, that Bob Dylan had been riding not his cast-iron, built-for-battle BSA 650 (or Triumph Bonneville; accounts vary), but one of the tinsplate Tonka-toys that were the best Japan could do then: the crash would have folded up his machine into the size of a double CD and tucked the blue-eyed boy from Hibbing, Minnesota, neatly into what remained of the rear left baggage pannier. It would have been the perfect Elvis / Valentino career move, a dramatic rock and roll full-stop to the perfect pop career. He could have had memorial concerts, candlelight vigils, fan suicides, anniversary TV specials, tribute records (*I Remember Bobby Dylan*, maybe, or *There's A New Star In Heaven Tonight: B-o-b D-y-l-a-n*). He'd have been immortal. Alive, he's just a cranky old god who does concerts. British motorcycles? The hell with them. Consider the Zimmerman kid's position in late 1966. In the two years since abandoning a worthy but slightly pious career of singing about the Bomb, civil rights, and the need to save the world, he had re-invented pop and folk music in four astonishingly original and affecting albums - *Another Side of Bob Dylan* to *Blonde On Blonde* - and two electrifying (one of them was also electrified) concert tours. You can call it art or poetry if you want; it all sounds just the same. He was adored not only by the hipsters, but by the mainstream youth audience, a sure sign of true pop virtue. He also passed the Jonathan Swift test for genius: all the dunces were in confederacy against him. Folkie fossils like Ewan MacColl ranted about 'fourth-form poetry' and 'the lure of the almighty dollar'; indignant twerps came to the 1966 concerts to yell 'Judas!' and 'Where's Ringo!' at the sight of the accursed electric guitars and a grand piano festooned with fairy lights. Even that appalling sycophant, Allen Ginsberg, took a while to notice what was blowing in the wind. A contemporary comic strip in the *International Times* has a stoned Dylan strumming a Stratocaster and mumbling ramalama fa-fa-fa-fa-fa while Ginsberg plucks his sleeve, wheedling *Sing us another song about Negroes, Bobby*.

After those exhilarating years, when the ghost of electricity howled in the bones of his face and that cool, sardonic, yet kindly drawl whispered hallucinatory ballads of experience through the speakers of a million Dansettes, changing a million lives, there was a falling off. Inevitable; he couldn't go on getting better, and he couldn't stay the same. That isn't really what went wrong. Throughout the ensuing 27 years, lesser peaks in his output have continued to come along at longer and longer intervals - *Blood On The Tracks*, *Desire*, *Oh Mercy!*(sic)- but the trend has been remorselessly downwards, often embarrassingly so. What happened? We did it: Dylan's fans. We made a god of him and put him beyond criticism, formed a mystical secular religion and turned the songs into its scriptures. If some of them seemed like rotten songs, well, that just showed we weren't worthy of their mysteries. Dylan, who must have known better than any of us about his artistic decline, can't have



taken long to discover he had worshippers on his hands rather than mere customers; and I think that, like all false gods, he quickly came to despise his dupes. Effectively, we told him Baby, please stop trying, and he took us at our word. The man who said 'I'm just a song and dance man' became the centre of a risible cottage industry of fanzine interpretation; the minstrel boy who warned us not to follow leaders has a slavish audience of followers, all chanting in perfect unison don't follow leaders. How else to interpret what I saw and heard when Dylan played Glasgow's SECC a couple of years ago? Accompanied by a band who seemed to have made each other's acquaintance only the day before, and that of the songs only as they were played, Dylan shambled through a mangled selection of his back pages, contempt for audience and songs dripping from every desultory performance. The punters loved it, just like the old Establishment night-club satire crowd did one night in 1963 when a tired and emotional Peter Cook finished his act with the words *Sod off, you ugly, bone-headed bastards*. I had a few drinks after the Glasgow show with some of the high priesthood of British Dylanism - the guys who compile the newsletters, write the Ph D theses, spot the trains - and the earnest talk was of how Dylan was 're-inventing himself', 'challenging the audience', and other euphemisms for He stunk. I went home, listened to *Blonde on Blonde* again and, as usual, it made me think of frosty teenage Christmases and whisky and sad times and happy times and other stuff that doesn't really matter, and I thought Bob Dylan would never make a really good record or do a good show again unless people stopped paying for the rotten ones. Failing that, which is a pretty safe bet, it's time he laid down his weary tune. Or bought another motorcycle.

## LETTER IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE HERALD ARTICLE

Source: your beloved (ex) editor. Not yet printed in *The Herald* surprisingly enough

Kenneth Wright's piece on Bob Dylan in *The Herald* (Weekender, 30/10/93) seems designed to get a response from an irate Dylan fan - so here one is! It is an interesting exercise to compare Mr. Wright's views with those of *The [Glasgow] Herald* editorial after Mr. Dylan's 1989 Glasgow shows. Talk about polar opposites! However, that is not why am I writing - vicious attacks in the press having dogged Dylan almost since the beginning of his career and almost without respite and he has survived them all. Instead I have three other areas of complaint:

1. The completely one-sided view Mr. Wright gives of those who still like Mr. Dylan's work.
2. The way Mr. Wright elevates his current disillusionment with Dylan into an "authoritative" trashing of years and years of Mr. Dylan's work.
3. The timing of this article.

1. Mr. Wright claims that in 1991 "the punters loved" the Glasgow shows and that afterward he found the "high priesthood" (sloppy journalism or what?) of Dylan fans inventing fatuous euphemisms for "he stunk". This is so mistaken as to cause me to believe he is deliberately lying. Mr. Dylan's 1991 UK shows were savaged in the Dylan fanzines; most fans (myself included) would place them as (some of) the worst they've ever witnessed. (There are many reasons for this but this is not the place to go into them, I'd like to say, though, that the Fall tour of the USA this year was at the opposite extreme of performance.)

Mr. Wright goes on to equate fanzines and all who write for them as "risible" and "train spotters". Of course, fanzines and fan clubs do attract "train spotters" but they get fun poked at them by the great majority of readers and contributors. I run a fanzine on Bob Dylan and see no evidence of trainspotting in my publication. As long as one doesn't become self-important or lose one's sense of humour or perspective it is easy to escape the traps Mr. Wright describes. He is just taking a cheap shot at an easy target - nothing as po-faced, ill-informed and self aggrandizing as his article would be allowed in my pages.

He does, thankfully, also raise some accurate points - all of which have been raised and discussed at length within the fanzines he so despises. I am thinking in particular of the slavish reaction of Dylan fans at recent concerts - it is a pity Mr. Wright didn't actually report on something they did (the inane cheering for every rasp on the harmonica) rather than invent his own fantasy ("all chanting in perfect unison *don't follow leaders*").

2. The whole article stank - like so many before it - of petulance. I felt the writer had once found Dylan meant a lot to him and, now this was no longer the case, he decided to take out his own sense of "betrayal" on Dylan and those who still find much to admire in that man's work. To this end he magnified his view of a couple of, admittedly dreadful, shows into a condemnation of years of superlative live entertainment.

3. Finally, and perhaps most irritatingly, was the timing of this article. Mr Wright is upset at the 1991 concerts and *The Herald* allows him to tell us this in 1993 over 100 Dylan shows later. Why?

Postscript

I hope that you can find space to print the above, or if you condense it that you do not weaken my points unduly. I'd like to try your patience with what I think is an interesting aside to the whole question of "trainspotting" and "risible fandom". The activities of the Dylan fanzine writers as they document the career of this living artist would be called something other than "trainspotting" if they were applied to a minor seventeenth century poet - "academic research" perhaps.

Similar snobbery applies to excessive fandom, for example - move the spotlight from a current artist in the entertainment world to a revered figure from the Great Literary Tradition and answer me this: *Is anything in the world of Bob Dylan fandom as "risible" as Fyodor Dostoyevsky still being served tea everyday in his study over a century after his death?*

**REVIEW OF 17 NOVEMBER 1993**

Source: **New York Times** 19 Nov 93  
by Jon Pareles

On a whim backed by logistical muscle, Bob Dylan slipped into New York City this week for four shows in two nights at the Supper Club in Manhattan. The tickets were free to fans who heard a radio announcement and braved long lines; the overjoyed audience became extras as the shows were filmed for purposes yet to be decided.

At Wednesday's late show, the final one, Mr. Dylan strolled on stage with his band, took off his cowboy hat and picked up his guitar. And for a little more than an hour, he performed with a fire, tenderness, playfulness and ornery charm that have surfaced only fitfully in recent years; he didn't hold back his smiles. For those who have heard him mumbling his best songs or reducing their melodies to one note, the concert was a welcome reminder that one of America's greatest musical minds is nowhere near retirement.

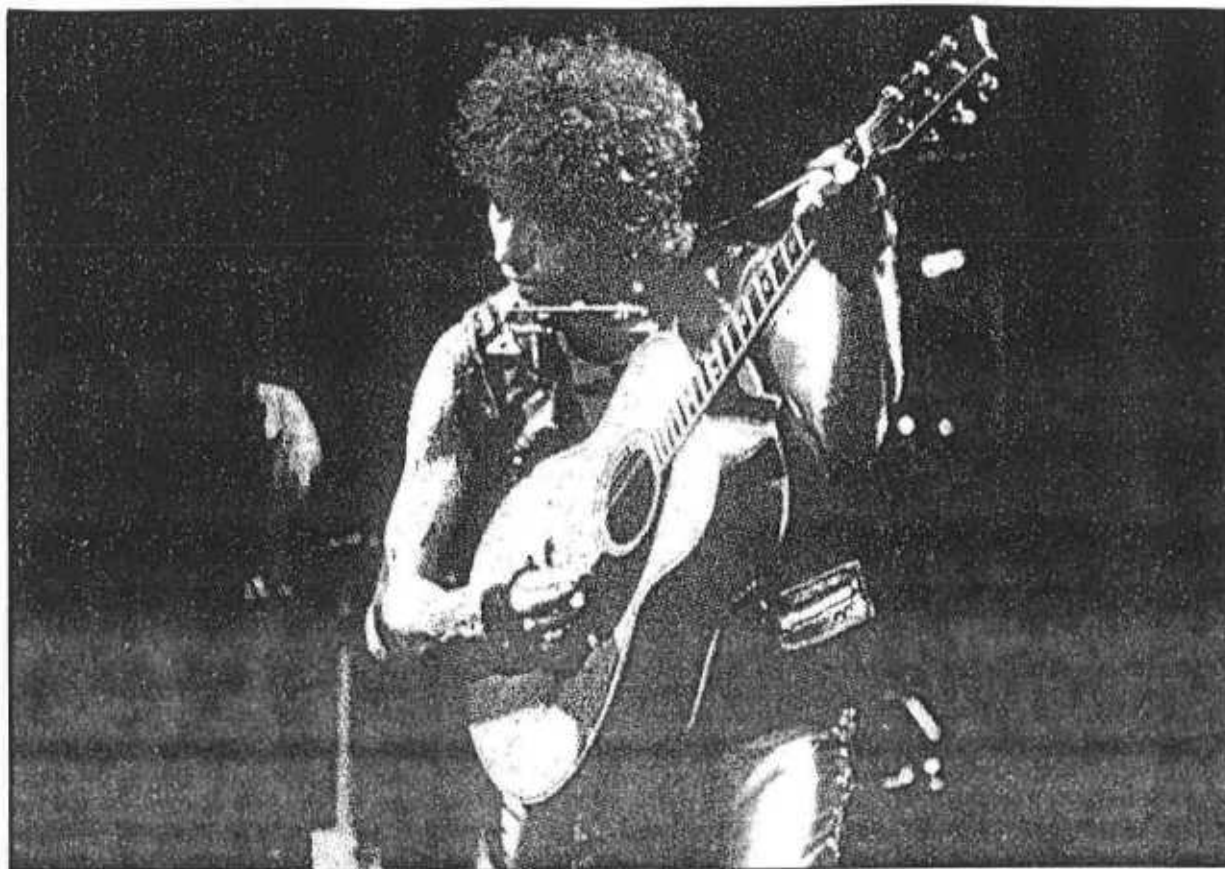
Mr. Dylan has just released **World Gone Wrong** (Columbia), his second recent album of traditional songs performed solo. The set on Wednesday included songs from both albums, as well as selected older songs like **Queen Jane Approximately** and **Lay Lady Lay**. They were all reshaped by Mr. Dylan and limber four-man band that was part country, part folk-rock. And Mr. Dylan not only sang with careful attention to every phrase, spontaneously transforming every line, but also played plenty of acoustic lead guitar.

Mr. Dylan's recent solo albums bring him back to the kinds of songs that first inspired him: rural blues and ballads that commemorate ordinary people with resonant but plain-spoken poetry. They're songs about love, death, war, poverty, desolation and faith, and they seem to have recharged Mr. Dylan. He sings like his folk sources, disdainful of well-tempered tunings, full of breaks and rasps, at once stylized and natural; a true American syncretist, he has pulled together blues and country and gospel styles to sound both deeply rooted and utterly individual. And on Wednesday night, he made all of his idiosyncrasies say something.

A low scratch voice brought bleak resignation to **Delia**; talk-sung verses gave **Tight Connection to My Heart** the ease of conversation. **Queen Jane Approximately** moved from humble but knowing understatement to dramatic, octave-plus leaps. The oracular pronouncements of **Ring Them Bells** (from the 1989 album **Oh Mercy**) had an unswerving confidence; the down-but-not-out come-ons of **Ragged and Dirty**, the first song, were sly and jaunty.

The band - dressed in identical double-breasted suits with burgundy shirts - gave each song a cheerful, unobtrusive lift. **Jack-a-Roe**, a modal ballad from **World Gone Wrong**, had an intricately plinking arrangement, including a banjo, that recalled Pentangle; **Weeping Willow**, a song Mr. Dylan has not recorded, was a finger-picked country-blues. Bucky Baxter, on steel guitar and pedal steel guitar, traded pealing solos with Mr. Dylan's spunky acoustic guitar leads, which were part melody, part riff.

Mr. Dylan's song choices moved from earthy love and its complications to a sense of redemption, from **Lay Lady Lay** to **Forever Young** and a crowning **I Shall Be Released**. **Forever Young** was something like a benediction to a crowd whose ages ranged from the 20's to, Apparently, the 50's; **I Shall Be Released** was forthright and determined. But Mr. Dylan didn't treat the songs with any sort of muted reverence; he rasped, he syncopated, he moved from defiance to gentleness. His improvisation remade his own songs and the traditions they came from, helping his audience to rediscover them one more time.



**FRIDAY:** Minnesota's Bob Dylan kicks off the Grandstand's big weekend lineup.

### ■ Positively Wall Street:

Top ticket price for a recent **Bob Dylan-Santana** show at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles was a whopping and obscene \$65. As Mark Brown, the pop-music columnist for *The Orange County Register*, pointed out nostalgically, Dylan was the man who once said, "Money doesn't talk, it swears." Perhaps it's time for Bob to suck on soap. — **FRED GOODMAN**



Bob Dylan, though, was unpredictably brilliant! The razor sharp, punky strut through 'Rainy Day Women,' and spiky renditions of 'All Along the Watchtower' and 'Watching the River Flow' endeared him to the crowd who gave their only display of real enthusiasm all weekend. His acoustic songs were best. 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue' sounded brand new. At 90 minutes, Dylan's set just about justified the price of admission. Headliner Jerry Lee Lewis didn't try to top that. He was content to do his thing on hits like 'Roll Over Beethoven,' 'A Whole Lotta Shakin'' and the country soul of 'You Win Again.'

KEITH WATTERSON

**Bob Dylan,  
Ray Charles, Chris-  
ty Moore u.a.  
Fleadh More,  
Tramore, Irland**

### • Today-Sunday/State Fairgrounds

**I**f After wandering around the expansive Fairgrounds all day, fairgoers will find few greater pleasures than resting their feet and taking in a Grandstand concert by a top-notch national act or two. Tonight's headliner is one of the most important figures in rock history, Bob Dylan. If music lovers needed a reminder of Dylan's unparalleled songwriting skills, it was provided at last year's New York concert celebrating his 30 years in music. Dozens of musicians — including Neil Young, George Harrison, Stevie Wonder and Eric Clapton — adapted a Dylan tune to their own style, but what emerged was the Hibbing-born songsmith's brilliant writing. His latest ventures return to the traditional folk style that launched his career, but his concerts always mine treasures from throughout his three decades in the business.

Warming up is Santana, the latest incarnation of the Latin rock combo fronted by guitarist extraordinaire Carlos Santana.

■ **WHAT:** Grandstand shows

■ **WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. today and Saturday, 5:30 p.m. Sunday

■ **WHERE:** State Fairgrounds, Falcon Heights

■ **TICKETS:** \$16-\$8

■ **CALL:** 642-2227



Bob Dylan (In a 1989 photo) was his eclectic self last night at Wolf Trap.

## Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan's concert at Wolf Trap last night, part of his "Endless Tour," was endlessly fascinating and mostly for the right reasons.

There was, after all, a Bob for all seasons, beginning with the acoustic Dylan, who opened the show with a rootsy, ragtimey quintet version of the Rev. Gary Davis's "Good as I Been to You," then punctuated the 75-minute performance with a rendition of "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" so compelling that it seemed as if he had read of her demise that morning, not 30 years ago.

There was the electric (and enigmatic) Dylan, fashioning a slash-chord arrangement of "All Along the Watchtower" and dropping the chorus to "Like a Rolling Stone" altogether, making it sound far more weary than rancorous. Then there was the Nashville Dylan, nassally crooning ballads nicely accented by Bucky Baxter's pedal steel guitar, mandolin and dobro; and the born-again Dylan, raising hellfire on "God Knows."

The predictable Bob also surfaced, on yet another tiresome reading of "Maggie's Farm," along with the impenetrable Dylan, the incorrigible mumbler who no doubt had more than a few fans in the house playing "Name That Tune." For the most part, though, subtitles weren't necessary.

The opening set by Santana reflected band leader Carlos Santana's wish for a "world without borders" and was nearly as colorful as the murals adjoining the stage. Rap, funk and reggae filtered into what he called "an ocean of music," but as the still potent combination of "Black Magic Woman" and "Oye Como Va" demonstrated, the strongest current was produced by the band's crackling Afro-Caribbean polyrhythms and Santana's magnificent blues guitar work. A special treat came near the end of the show when he invited one of his heroes, Washington-based blues guitarist Bobby Parker, to join him for an extended jam.

Dylan and Santana return tonight.

—Mike Joyce



## BOB DYLAN

Singer and songwriter Bob Dylan opened the door between folk and rock for artists all over the nation. His success made it commercially and artistically respectable for categorical folk artists to use electric sounds, and for pop artists to call upon acoustic folk sounds. Dylan made it possible for songwriters to express a wide range of emotions and social attitudes that had never before been well received.

Born Robert Allen Zimmerman in Minnesota in 1941, Dylan began playing guitar at the age of 14. During high school he played in several rock and roll bands, yet it wasn't until well after his high school graduation that he made the transition to folk and the decision to become a folk singer.

In pursuit of his career, Dylan traveled to New York in 1961 where he performed at the Cafe Wha? in Greenwich Village. Several months after his first performance, Dylan was offered a professional residency at Gerdes Folk City, supporting John Lee Hooker and, by the end of the year, had recorded his first LP, *Bob Dylan*.

Dylan's success has continued through numerous albums and several tours around the world. He has been named a musical "legend" although with all of his success does not see himself as such. As he has said in an interview with *Los Angeles Times Magazine* reporter Robert Hilburn, "It wasn't me who called myself a legend. It was thrown at me by editors in the media who wanted to play around with me or have something new to tell their readers. But it stuck. ... It was important for me to come to the bottom of this legend thing, which has no reality at all. What's important isn't the legend, it's the art, the work. A person has to do whatever they are called on to do. If you try to act a legend, it's nothing but hype."

Legend, or no legend, Dylan has made a name for himself. Known as a quiet, dour performer, he has the ability to express the deepest emotion and feeling through his poetic lyrics. Dylan was first recognized for his talent in 1982, when he was admitted to the Songwriters' Hall of Fame. He has since been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988, awarded the medal of the Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture, in 1990—the highest cultural honor which can be bestowed upon a foreigner—and accepted a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammy Awards ceremony in 1991.

"Older people—people my age—don't come out anymore," Dylan says in *The Times*. "A lot of the shows over the years were people coming out of curiosity and their curiosity wasn't fulfilled. They weren't transported back to the '60s. Lightning didn't strike."

"The shows didn't make sense for them, and they didn't make sense for me. That had to stop, and it took a long time to stop it. A lot of people were coming out to see The Legend, and I was trying to just get on stage and play music."

In 1988, in response to his frustrations, Dylan began what was to be named The Never-Ending Tour. Although his most recent release, *Bob Dylan the bootleg series volumes 1-3 [rare & unreleased] 1961-1991*, is a compilation of his work through the years, the original magic is still there. "It's one thing to say, 'There's a new record out and people are responding to the new songs,' which is encouraging. But that's not the case. There's no new album, and it's hard for me to know just what that means, why people come out and what they are looking for or listening for. ... Maybe the same things I was looking for when I wrote them."

## Something Is Happening at Mr. Jones Beach

It might be a stretch to give **Bob Dylan** and **Santana** equal billing, but that's the way it's been going on the concert tour (also featuring the reggae group **Wailing Souls**) that comes to the Jones Beach Theater tonight and tomorrow night. So equitable is the arrangement that the two have been taking turns closing the show. Tonight's concert will open with Wailing Souls, followed by Santana and Dylan. Tomorrow night, the Wailing Souls will be followed by Dylan and Santana.

Carlos Santana continues to mine the Latin-jazz-rock fusion that has made his group popular for the last 20 years. But Dylan has earned a reputation for

unpredictability. He is said to perform without a planned set list, and seems to give different, sometimes perplexing, arrangements to his classic songs whenever he plays them.

In a joint interview the two gave Greg Kot of the *Chicago Tribune* last month, the usually uncommunicative Dylan said, "My whole thing has been about disallowing demagoguery. The songs I recorded in my past, they're almost like demos. I'm still trying to figure out what some of them are about. The more I play them, the better idea I have how to play them. . . . don't allow the past to encroach on the present."

**Bob Dylan / Santana / Wailing Souls.** Tonight and tomorrow night at the Jones Beach Theater. Show times 8 p.m. All tickets \$31.50. ■

# Dylan Plays Them Straight

**BOB DYLAN AND SANTANA.** Two veterans, Friday night at the Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, where they also performed Saturday. Wailing Souls opened the show.

By Wayne Robins  
STAFF WRITER

**L**EAVE IT to Bob Dylan to continue to confound expectations and defy predictions. Unwilling to become a nostalgia act, he's been known to crank out nearly unrecognizable versions of his classic songs. Word of such sacrilege has gotten around, and there were thousands of empty seats at Friday night's show at Jones Beach.

But that night, Dylan took another turn in his approach to songs. That was evident as early as the second tune, when "Memphis Blues Again" was clearly discernible as . . . "Memphis Blues Again." Instead of chaotic arrangements that have sometimes rendered his best songs unlistenable, Dylan and his band played with clarity and simplicity.

There was a relaxed, swinging feel to the band's arrangements, which usually featured upright bass, two hollow-body guitars, electric guitar and drums. "Watching the River Flow" had a gentle rockabilly touch, "Tangled Up in Blue" was a stirring uptempo blues, and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" had some of the dexterous interplay of a string quartet arrangement.

Dylan made a virtue of directness on "All Along the Watchtower," which he introduced by saying: "Here's a song about pain." And while others, from Johnny Winter to P. J. Harvey, have taken their liberties with "Highway 61 Revisited," Dylan's version Friday night was just that: a revved-up revisitation of a classic arrangement.

But beyond adding a visceral melodic twist on "Gates of Eden" and an unexpectedly decorous jam on "Simple Twist of Fate," Dylan was not compelled to lionize the present by obliterating his past.

Dylan has often chosen to tour with other established artists in recent years. There was a disastrous



Newsday / John Kenting

Bob Dylan, reverting to familiar arrangements, at Jones Beach.

double bill with the Grateful Dead, as well as a more felicitous pairing with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. This tour the co-headliner is Santana, and the match-up is odd, since their musical styles — and audiences — are so diffuse.

Though in some recent shows Dylan's vocal enunciation was a rambling mumble, it was uncommonly brisk and clear Friday night. But his broad nasal delivery — he sounded like Bing Crosby with laryngitis on "Simple Twist of Fate" — is a taste not readily acquired late on chilly, windy nights, and many of the uninitiated exited a few songs into his set, which didn't begin until 10:30 p.m.

Santana, the venerable Latin-rock band led by the adventurous guitarist Carlos Santana, played for two hours that were both too discursive and too inclusive. There was Spanish rapping and Grateful Dead-style jamming. There were terse funky organ riffs, and spacey guitar excursions. There was a rootsy three-percussionist Latin rhythm section, and an Anglo singer who embodied the most charmless elements of Mickey Thomas, Michael Bolton, and any of the guys in Styx. ■



# THE TRAVELING WILBURY

Dylan returns to New York town. Don't think twice, it's all right.

DAVID HINCKLEY

Times Staff Writer

**FOR DYLAN LET HIS** hoot-heels wander through his musical history again Saturday night, and this time he came out with a flow which at its best moments sounded relaxed, almost reflective.

On a cool evening at Jones Beach, he thus unveiled yet another face from the Never-Ending Tour which began in 1988. But if the tour has evolved, it also keeps reaching back to its own roots and the roots of Dylan, which are the roots of American music.

The acoustic strumming on a transcendent "Don't Think Twice," the high point of the evening and a must have for Dylan tape collectors, could have been lifted directly from the acoustic segments he was

doing at the beginning of the tour, and they in turn tied back into Dylan's own early folk work, which he eventually was able to mix in with his equal fondness for Little Richard and Buddy Holly.

But good history lessons come subtly from any artist, including Dylan, so it's left to the fans to decide whether the acoustic segment of this show, which has a pronounced country flavor, may be the "Nashville Skyline" show he never gave. He's never played "Skyline" much, but the tone and style of Saturday's "Desolation Row" and "Don't Think Twice," in particular, track directly back to that album.

Of course, what may have been more immediately striking to Dylan fans is that he not only sang virtually all the words to "Desolation Row,"

but pronounced them clearly. Anyone who remembers the Dead shows of 1987, or "Masters of War" from the 1991 Grammys, can be forgiven for wondering if Dylan would ever pronounce again.

Not that he played "Desolation Row" wholly straight. He rearranged the melody and seemed at times to be toying with the lyrics, particularly the "Cinderella she seems so easy / It takes one to know one, she smiles" lines. But most of the new touches were nice ones, like adding pedal steel — and if "Desolation Row" with pedal steel sounds like something one would only hear at a Bob Dylan show, well, yes, it probably is.

Altogether he played for about an hour and a half, covering only about a dozen songs because he extended

them with long instrumental endings.

For most artists, often including Dylan, this is a sign of serious trouble, suggesting boredom, padding or a desperate attempt to disguise a shot voice. But Dylan's voice sounded pretty good Saturday, keeping in mind it is still Dylan's voice. He pinched it up for "You're A Big Girl Now," and while it had raspy passages, at least it didn't sound like he viewed the lyrics as the enemy.

Happily, the instrumentals did not suggest Dylan was absorbing some of the excesses of co-headliner Santana. Rather they put down a musical bed and added texture, from a hard-rocking "Maggie's Farm" to a folk-styled "Girl From The North Country."

As has been his habit this

summer, he did several times from his Christian phase, including a gentle "God Knows" and a gospel-like "What Good Am I." In the same spirit he also rocked through one of his warning-to-the-world tunes, "Everything Is Broken."

But this was far less a show about messages than music and moments, and after five years of touring, the news may be no more than this: Dylan seems to be enjoying himself. Not that he said so. As usual, he said nothing, though he did introduce his four-piece band by working their names into the jamming at the end of "Maggie's Farm."

Dylan and Santana played Friday and Saturday at Jones Beach, and tomorrow they're at the Garden State Arts Center.

## Dylan, Santana transcend the years

Reprinted from late editions of yesterday's Globe.

By Steve Morse  
GLOBE STAFF

**MANSFIELD** — If you were looking for fossils, they weren't at Great Woods Sunday night. Although Bob Dylan and Santana have both seen some hard miles in the post-Woodstock years, they shrugged them off Sunday night. Santana was his shamanic, transcendent self (to no one's great surprise), but the shock of the night was a riveting, well-above-par set from the perked-up Dylan.

The pair of famed performers did not jam together, but they played generously long, 90-minute sets that took a rapt crowd of 10,000 fans through a time tunnel of memories without wallowing in them. This was a lively, rarely stale night keyed by the complementary styles of Dylan's rootsy Americana and Santana's exhilarating Latin express.

Furthering the night's global scope was Jamaica's Wailing Souls, a showy but ultratight reggae group that goes back to the days of Bob Marley. They were hampered by a terrible sound mix Sunday, however, because most of the crowd hadn't filed in and the sound boomed off the empty seats — a common hazard for

SANTANA AND BOB DYLAN

With the Wailing Souls

At: Great Woods Center for the  
Performing Arts, Sunday night

opening acts at Great Woods.

As for Dylan, terrible sound has become his trademark in recent years (remember his horror-show performances during the Grammy awards and on David Letterman?), but not Sunday night. His voice sounded richer and less raspy than his latter-day norm, and he ingeniously mixed hard-edged electric segues (the best went from "Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again" to a white-hot "All Along the Watchtower") with sublime acoustic interludes on "Black Jack Davey" (a song that Steeleye Span once popularized), along with the waltzy "To Ramona," the trippy "Boots of Spanish Leather" and a resonant encore of "It Ain't Me Babe," by which time the crowd had poured down to the front.

Naturally, Dylan never acknowledged the crowd by eye contact (is there a more inscrutable stage performer?), but he was clearly touched because he worked much harder than usual. He dug out surprise tracks (a transfixing treatment of "I and I" from his "Infidels" album) and cranked up the energy on a set-closing, shout-crazed "Maggie's

Farm," during which he also played spellbinding guitar licks and turned loose an exceptional backing group, especially guitarist Jon Jackson, steel guitarist Bucky Baxter and frenzied drummer Winston Watson.

Santana wasted no time taking the show to an even higher plane. His stage set was a splash of rainbow colors, including a bright red mural of children of various nationalities holding hands. And Santana spread the same, multi-ethnic message in his music. He soloed with ferocious spiritual grace, exploding on the expected "Black Magic Woman" and "Oye Como Va," balanced by the shimmering "Somewhere in Heaven" (by Gabor Szabo, whom he humbly called a major influence) and by a brief sermon in which he debunked politics ("it's all dead") and espoused simple human compassion.

The compassion was in the music — and in Santana's nods to his sidemen, whom he entrusted with long, intoxicating solos, the best coming from keyboardist Chester Thompson, timbales strongman Karl Perazzo and bassist Myron Dove. Singer Alex Ligertwood — once considered a weak link in the group — also shone Sunday night, showing marked improvement. The addition of rapper Vorriece also revealed Santana's contemporary side, providing another antidote to staleness.

# Dylan, Santana: Don't Think Twice, It's All Right

The potential for parody was there, but Mr. Tambourine Man and Mr. Guitar prove they've still got it.

By ROBERT HILBURN  
TIMES POP MUSIC CRITIC

**"T**wo legends—one night," declared an ad for the Bob Dylan-Santana tour package, treading perilously close to parody.

It's just one baby step away in a "Saturday Night Live" sketch writer's imagination from the pure spoof of "Mr. Tambourine Man meets Mr. Guitar."

In truth, the biggest potential for parody on Saturday at the Hollywood Bowl rested on the shoulders of Legend No. 1, Dylan.

The most acclaimed songwriter of the rock era, Dylan appeared so ragged and indifferent as a singer in a pair of disastrous TV appearances in recent years that even a mother's love would be tested.

Dylan had the right idea at the 1991 Grammy telecast when he sang "Masters of War"—a blistering mockery of the show's timid, commercial tone during the Persian Gulf crisis. But all that anyone remembers from the night was the incomprehensibility of his vocal.

This tour—which continues Tuesday at the Glen Helen Blockbuster Pavilion in Devore—should do much to combat that disheartening image, which was sometimes



reinforced in unfocused concerts.

Returning to the Bowl, where he was the guest artist 30 years ago at a Joan Baez concert, Dylan regained much of his honor as a performer. In an endearing, 90-minute set before an enthusiastic crowd of 14,500, he demonstrated a commitment and joy of music that many feared had left him forever.

Though his enunciation remained trying at times Saturday, Dylan no longer seemed reluctant or retreating. In the hundreds of shows he has done in recent years—many of them relatively low-profile concerts on college campuses and in small halls, Dylan has discovered there is, indeed, life for him as a musician—not only as a living museum piece.

He will still sing the '60s songs whose lyrics and ideas defined his rock legend, but

he has found comfort in focusing on other elements of his music—including a love for old blues and folk tunes. Indeed, one of Saturday's highlights was his spirited harmonica and guitar playing on "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right."

Wearing a Western-style black suit, Dylan emphasized his career-musician role by opening with "You're Gonna Quit Me," a traditional song from his 1992 album "Good As I Been to You."

He and his four-piece, blues-and-country-rooted band then moved easily between acoustic and electric versions of his vintage and recent material—scoring as well on an explosive version of 1990's "Gotta Know," a song about struggle and morality, as the tender rendition of 1964's "It Ain't Me, Babe" that closed the show.

By WAYNE SAROYAN  
Correspondent

**T**he Bob Dylan-Santana concert at the Concord Pavilion was a study in contrasts and style between two legendary performers, each entering his fourth decade as a force in contemporary music.

On the one hand, there's Dylan, who opened Thursday's sold-out doubleheader with a rambling, loose-knit 80-minute performance. Dylan is the wordsmith, the poet of lost generations. His compelling artistry lies in all the risk-taking and controversy that comes with a popular singer who doesn't sing popular songs.

He's also the iconoclast, lurking about in the shadows of the dimly lit stage, barely acknowledging the audience until his encore of "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35."

At Concord, Dylan still played his self-appointed role as the folk antihero, recasting the sprightly acoustic bounce of "Simple Twist of Fate" into an electrified, slow-rock-

## CONCERT REVIEW

ing time capsule of bygone love. He added a melodic harmonica coda to the tail end of "Desolation Row," and bounced back for a hard-rock take on "Maggie's Farm."

He remains content following an intuitive path, wrapping his lyrics around the music where and when they feel comfortable. His emotional impact comes draped in cerebral dressings, unfettered by any pretensions of Art with a capital A.

His nasal inflections haven't diminished, and his singing can be grating at worst and indecipherable at best, but that's beside the point. He's Dylan, and that should be enough.

**W**here Dylan once sang the latter song with the defiance of a young man insisting on his independence, his vocal at the Bowl, though hoarse, had a warm disarming quality to it, almost as if he is now able to let down his guard and celebrate with the audience all the years together—and one hopes, still to come.

Legend No. 2, guitarist Carlos Santana, displays a soulful purity and beauty on his all-too-few solo turns, but his individuality is largely lost in the band's by now predictable percussion-heavy approach. Also: Someone should warn him about the parody dangers of speaking between songs about dreaming of a world with no flags, boundaries or wallets—this at a concert where the top tickets were \$65.

# Dylan's still a work in progress

*A legend who is hard to pin down, but great to hear*

By KARLA PETERSON  
Arts Writer

Ain't no use to sit and wonder why, babe. In concert, Bob Dylan is going to do what Bob Dylan is going to do, and if you can't follow along, you'd better stay home with your moldy albums and your memories of the way those great old Dylan songs sounded before Dylan got ahold of them.

Sharing a bill with Santana at the Sports Arena Sunday night, the 52-year-old Dylan was alternately charming and frustrating in a 90-minute example of how a rock legend is not supposed to conduct business. He didn't smile or chat. He didn't showboat or pander. And, in the affronts of all affronts, he reminded the 10,500-plus crowd that the songs they embraced as their own still belong to him.

Sounding more nasal than ever, Dylan treated his songs like Silly Putty, stretching "Maggie's Farm" into an extended boogie stomp, teasing "Tangled Up in Blue" into a Allman Brothers-flavored epic.

Anyone expecting a reverent greatest-hits package or a rock revelation was in the wrong place.

But if you were willing to take your epiphanies where you could find them, Bob Dylan rewarded your patience in numerous small ways that eventually added up to one generous musical gift.

Wedge between an impressively assured set by local trio Bad Mood Zeus and Santana's celebratory blowout, Dylan opened his part of the evening with an offhand offering from last year's "Good As I Been to You," followed by a parade of old favorites that bore only a fleeting resemblance to their former selves.

With his four-man band providing capable (and frequently colorless) support, Dylan poked and prodded his way through "Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again" and "All Along the Watchtower" with the thoroughly absorbed air of an archaeologist sifting through an ancient burial site.

"Isn't this interesting?" he seemed to be thinking as he gently examined "Simple Twist of Fate" and found that it was more beautiful than he remembered. "Why, here's another good one" was the message behind his warmly affectionate takes on "I Don't Believe You (She Acts Like We Never Have Met)" and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," both of which turned 27 this year.

In the liner notes to the 1985 "Biograph" anthology, Dylan explained his own mystique by saying "I'm a mystery only to those who haven't felt the same things I have." And while Bob as Everyman is a concept that takes some getting used to, it comes in handy in times like this, when the legend refuses to act like one and the worshippers have to do some rethinking of their own.

He was as inscrutable as ever on Sunday. But as he worked through each tune, restlessly searching for new ways to phrase old lines, turning songs inside out searching for inspiration he may have thought was long gone, it became clear that no matter how he feels about the distractions and absurdities that come with it, Dylan is a guy who still loves his work.

Even as his voice threatened to turn into a parody of itself and the long jams that concluded each song became predictable, Dylan's obvious devotion to the craft he has been practicing for more than 30 years was the steady engine that kept the erratic show on course.

If you watched Dylan lean into the fierce guitar solos that sparked "Maggie's Farm" and the biting "Memphis Blues Again," you could see it. If you listened to the furious "Tangled Up in Blue," you could hear it. And if you were expecting no more or less than a man who is still a fascinating work in progress, you could feel it.

After Dylan's knotty, demanding set, Carlos Santana's sunny, guitar- and percussion-driven tunes were a relief, for a while anyway.

Thanks especially to keyboardist Chester Thompson and percussionists Raul Rekow and Karl Perazzo, Santana's Latin-flavored favorites lightened the mood until it seemed possible that we might dance again after all. But despite such beloved hits as "Oye Como Va," the eerie "Black Magic Woman" and the pummeling "Jingo," the two-hour show was hampered by repetitive jams and a few too many wan filler tunes.

As always, however, Carlos Santana's fleet guitar sliced through the clutter, providing another reminder that nostalgia is only a state of mind, not a statement of fact.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**That was then:** Bob Dylan performing during his 30th-anniversary tribute concert last year at Madison Square Garden.

# Bob's Supper dates

## Dylan treats his fans to four free club shows

**T**HERE was order and balance — everything was where it belonged. The stars were in the sky, fish were in the sea, scalpers were everywhere, and Bob Dylan was performing on a tiny stage in a small club.

Even though it's been more than 30 years since Bob played for free at the little folk clubs in the Vil-



Dan Aquilante

lage, all that was missing at Tuesday's and Wednesday's free Supper Club shows was the traditional passing of the hat at the end.

During Wednesday's late set Dylan was positively magnificent. At that show, the man recaptured his youth in a short, powerful performance and remained forever young.

It wasn't as grand a citywide gesture as Paul Simon's Central Park bash a few years back, but don't

tell that to any of the thousand or so lucky New Yorkers who actually nabbed a free ticket at Tower Records to one of these four Dylan shows at the 47th Street club.

For blocks surrounding the joint, scalpers were openly trying to either buy tickets for a \$100 a pop or sell 'em for twice that. To the credit of Dylan's fans, nobody on line outside the club was tempted by the cash.

Good choice. Had they taken the green and gone home, they would have missed Dylan and his four-man backup band wheel through about 10 tunes that included "Lay Lady Lay," "Queen Jane, Approximately," "Forever Young" and an inspired "I Shall Be Released."

During the just-over-an-hour set, Dylan occasionally lapsed into wounded-dog creaking door-hinge vocals that have been his signature style for the past few years, but mostly he delivered the material with an uncommon richness. There was even attention to pronouncing the words in English rather than in Dylan. His guitar work, all acoustic, was a mix of flat picked leads and strumming that was accented by Bucky Baxter's haunting slide-guitar work.

The best number in the evening was "Delia," from Dylan's latest CD, "World Gone Wrong." He gave the song its due, delivering it with sadness and tenderness, making you share its story of betrayed, lost love. "Delia" is a traditional American song that has

## MUSIC review

been worked over a million times with Blind Willie McTell's and David Bromberg's versions topping the list. Dylan's cover, in concert, equaled those great performances.

All of the four performances were video-taped for an "undisclosed" project. Judging by the sales figures from Dylan's "30th Anniversary Tribute Concert" video, a tape from the Supper Club sessions will undoubtedly be available in the coming months.



## Dylan, Free

This week, Bob Dylan is performing in a New York City club for the first time in more than 30 years. But even rarer is the fact that the tickets for the shows were given away. That's right, as in free.

Mr. Dylan's four shows at the Supper Club in Manhattan — two were scheduled for last night, and two are to be tonight — are being filmed, but just why is not clear.

"They don't know what they want to do with it yet," said Michele Schweitzer, of Kathryn Schenker Associates, a publicity firm that represents Mr. Dylan. "They're going to look at it once it's finished to see if they want to do something."

More than 1,000 tickets for the shows went up for grabs on Monday at Tower Records in Greenwich Village. Ms. Schweitzer said that Mr. Dylan decided to give away the tickets because "he wanted to do this for the fans."





**BOB DYLAN****WORLD GONE WRONG**

(Columbia)

"World Gone Wrong" is a collection of covers from old folk and blues singers from who knows where or when. Like last year's "Good As I've Been To You", it's just a guitar, a harmonica and that bruised rasp. And, even though these are other people's songs, it seems as if they've been hanging up in Dylan's wardrobe for so long that they fit like a favourite shirt.

Bob's sleeve notes are a confused socio-ideological ramble about pimps and post-modernism that should be avoided at all costs. The dusty red velvet songs, on the other hand, are like an old diary in a semi-legible hand that you dip into to find a line that makes some sense of the muddled chaos of the modern mind. Every half formed, inarticulate notion that you ever had about these nihilistic times that we inhabit is measured out in the warm, fluid tones of Bob's guitar, constantly eddying upwards until it touches a point inside you that you've always kept hidden. You don't have to be bludgeoned senseless by a Marshall amp turned up to 11 to be bludgeoned senseless.

There are a few moments, such as "Stack A Lee", that are lost in a chaos of bathos but, when these songs glow, it's like a regiment of fireflies lighting up your room. "Blood In My Eyes" transcends every concept there is of a love song and gently wraps itself into a testimony of devotion ("Blood in my eyes for you baby/I don't care what in the world you do") that resonates an awkward fragility, as if by voicing that love it somehow becomes sullied.

More than anything, "World Gone Wrong" proves that a good song is timeless, universal and all those other worthy labels. These songs act as an ephemeral zeitgeist for a malcontent that rumbles along the decades; always finding some dark, dank place to take root and find a voice. It's a soul soundscape for this age of misanthropy and conspiracy. It also shows Dylan's musical history coming round full circle, back to "Song To Woody" on "Bob Dylan". Yeah, there may have been brighter days but I'm damned if I can remember them.

SARRA MANNING

**BOB DYLAN****World Gone Wrong**

Columbia

Pop culture hounds grow skeptical of mythic stature, religious digressions, and reclusive persons. In Bob Dylan's case, that just about leaves the voice, which I always trusted. Then came the jaw-dropper: a woe-begone troubadour strumming alone before several laterally mobile generations at that '92 Madison Square Garden tribute. The instrument that helped define working-class rebel passion was rasping "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" into sorry mush.

Must have been an off night. On *World Gone Wrong*, that cranky larynx

regains its ideal balance between Leadbelly's fire and Maybelle Carter's dread. Achy but not anxious, soothing but not soporific, Dylan's vocals float across the melodies, his burred timbre gently chafing notes instead of shredding them. Like '92's *Good As I've Been To You*, the new record consists of acoustic covers, focusing on country blues and folk ballads. This time around, Micajah Ryan pares the production to the bone, scrapping the harmonica as too decorative, pitting the voice against a lean, lissome guitar. The result is no "unplugged" rite of passion, where some middle-age rocker turns reflective and avuncular in his dusking career. Despite the calm on *World Gone Wrong*, dissatisfaction gnaws at every cut: Dylan's singing is wily and nuanced enough to avoid a benign roots homage.

Few Hallmark sentiments mar these tunes. The title song's narrator threatens to kill his woman and blames his



impulse on life's cruddiness. "Stack a Lee" — one of many songs about the notorious heavy, best known from Lloyd Price's 1959 "Stagger Lee" — shoots a man over a Stetson hat. The rejected lady from "Love Henry" pitches her man down a well, then tries to snuff the sole witness: her parrot.

Dylan's liner notes not only honor the artists he's borrowing from (Willie Brown, Tom Paley of New Lost City Ramblers, Blind Willie McTell) but chain-associate wildly on the lyrics, roving miles from themes to rail against technology, corporate thinking, and "alternative" life-styles. Yet "Blood In My Eyes," the most memorable track, expresses more about evil in far fewer words. This Mississippi Sheiks classic concerns a john who pays a hooker but she sloughs off the job; Dylan's haunted delivery captures all that is desperate and sinister in human desire. Although the album sort of achieves a spiritual closing ("Lone Pilgrim"), sexual doom hovers like a predator. For a release-hungry Minnesotan who dedicated the first song he ever wrote to Brigitte Bardot, maybe everything *can't* be replaced.

STEVE ANDERSON

**BOB DYLAN****World Gone Wrong**

(Columbia 474857)

TIRED, wizened, and so bereft of inspiration that he has had to resort once again to assembling a grab-bag of old folk tunes rather than write anything new of his own, Bob Dylan is clearly in a state of terminal artistic decline. Even so, he seems more engaged in his work on *World Gone Wrong* than he was on last year's lamentable *Good As I've Been To You*.

The sleeve notes, by Dylan himself, are a curious mixture of hard information about the various songs, and opaque, 1960s hipster-speak. Among the more palatable efforts is the mournful country blues of "Ragged & Dirty" — "One of the Willie Browns did this; schmaltz and pickled herring" — and the lilting "Blood In My Eyes", a song which sounds as if it might be a distant relation of "Corina Corina".

Although a lot of today's young guns profess to be playing their music only for themselves, jealously guarding their artistic "integrity" from any taint of commerciality, only an old dog like Dylan could make an album so genuinely unheeding of market conditions (and lacking in contemporary relevance) as this. In that sense, perhaps, *World Gone Wrong* boasts a certain grim merit. These are the sort of songs that Dylan might have considered for inclusion on his very earliest albums, but at least they are anchored deep in the soil that nurtured his prodigious talent in the first place.

It is still hard to excuse the wilful incompetence of the performances. His flat, croaky singing is accompanied by some shockingly duff guitar playing, and while a Dylan album without the fluffed notes would hardly be authentic, it is astounding, given the sophistication of modern studio technology, that a single acoustic guitar can be so badly recorded that it distorts. Well, astounding, that is, until a quick check of the credits reveals the legend: Produced by Bob Dylan.

## Rock

# Dylan puts the world to rights

By Don Carnell

**B**ob Dylan's latest recording, *World Gone Wrong* (Columbia 474857 2), is, like last year's "Good As I Been To You," another collection of traditional blues and folk songs performed with simple guitar and harmonica accompaniment.

But those who have dismissed it as a "contract filler" or even as evidence of writer's block, are completely missing the point.

Both through the songs themselves and in the excellent, self-penned sleeve notes, Dylan spells out his message: strange things are happening. Darkness covers the land. Corruption is everywhere.

Big business operates its evil unchecked. Greed and oppression triumph over compassion.

All resistance has been crushed. Technology — a big, big evil in Dylan's book — is slowly strangling any creativity in us, replacing real experience with arm's-length "virtual reality."

The songs, performed in an atmosphere of dark brooding, take in an endless list of themes: murder and



The ever-prolific Bob Dylan: songs performed with an atmosphere of dark brooding

retribution ("Stack A Lee"); lost love and friendship ("Delia"); pride ("Broke Down Engine"); war ("Two Soldiers"); despair and rebellion ("Blood In My Eyes"); and personal salvation ("Lone Pilgrim").

True, his voice is not what it once was, although I think his ever-deepening croakiness suits this kind of territory.

But his musicianship certainly compensates for what the old vocal chords lack.

His acoustic guitar playing is exciting and despite, or perhaps even because of, the subject matter, I found listening to this album a truly uplifting experience.

Once again, Dylan has remembered what most of his contemporaries have forgotten: that music, real music, can still have the power to

move you; that beyond the shallow glitziness of today's rock music, there exists a world where people are struggling against all the odds to get by.

That is Dylan's pitch now. I expect that — just as when he "went electric" or country, or gospel — it is not exactly a move to endear him to those who like their heroes neatly categorised and staying that way.

Reports that he is to play a series of gigs in a New York folk club merely confirm that he has, for now at least, returned to performing and recording the type of songs that graced his first album, "Bob Dylan," which blues scholar and historian John Hammond produced for him back in 1962.

What next, Bob, a Dylan sings Guthrie album?

### • BOB DYLAN *World Gone Wrong* (Columbia 474857)

THIS IS effectively Volume Two of *Good As I Been To You*, last year's collection of old folk and blues ballads. Another 10 whiskey parables of human frailty constitute *World Gone Wrong*, with the notable difference that this time Dylan has included sleeve-note annotations to each of the selections, written in his own semi-stream-of-consciousness style.

The performances seem in some cases more hurried and slapdash than before, and they're all poorly recorded, with loud tape hiss and indifferent miking. "Jack-A-Roe" is a satisfyingly dark, emotionally complex rendering, and Blind Willie McTell's "Broke Down Engine" is done with some spirit, Dylan even adding a little rat-a-tat-tat on his guitar's body as he sings the line "Can't you hear me, baby, rapping on your door?" But most of the album is rough and slapdash, and sung in a fairly dispassionate manner, expression having been

eroded from his once riveting voice by years of constant touring.

It's the liner-notes that offer the most interesting aspect of the album, Dylan using the opportunity to give a concerted moralistic broadside against the modern world, casting a traditional ballad like "Love Henry" as a tale of colonial exploitation, and even picking up one of Mark E Smith's cast-off notions when he describes an old Mississippi Sheik's blues as faultlessly made for the "New Dark Ages" we now live in. Elsewhere he writes of "firing a few random shots at the face of time" and gets quite worked up about "the insane world of entertainment exploding in our faces", positing these blasts from the past, in some cases quite bafflingly, as stern moral rejoinders to contemporary corruption.

Taken as a whole, with the album title, the splendid cover photos of Dylan drinking in top hat and gloves like some undertaker of the spirit, the songs steeped in deceit, treachery, venality and despair — not to mention

his sometimes slightly berserk annotations, the picture builds up of the Blues as Bible Study, a series of lessons to be interpreted, in this case by the priestly Bobness.

Hence the rough-hewn nature of the performances: Dylan obviously believes their immediacy and authenticity, stripped of frippery but rich in poetic speculation, is somehow a more noble mode of artistic expression than the blandishments of new technology that bombard us daily.

But his is a rather austere view of the blues, stripped of all the transcendent joy and indulgence of human weakness that is such a vital part of its tradition: there's no forgiveness in Bob's blues. And while one sympathises with his search for more enduring values, it's self-evident that the past and the primitive by no means have a monopoly on the truth, though they certainly seem to have a monopoly on Dylan's attentions these days.

Andy Gill



## BOB DYLAN

World Gone Wrong Columbia 474857-2

I was determined to not draw the reviewer's short Zimstraw this time, but those to whom I attempted to pass the buck told me that I'd been lumbered.

Well... This is essentially *Good As I Been To You Vol. 2*, another collection of traditional ballads, old country blues and American folk classics sounding as if they were knocked off in an afternoon of warts-and-all first takes by the lone Bobber with nought but his acoustic guitar and harmonica rack for company. Hrrumphh...

First, the best news. Yours truly was not the only one to lambast the old devil for his failure to give credit where due on that dreaded predecessor. Who knows if that reached his ears, but here we have a lengthy sleeve note in which good folks like Tom Paley, the Mississippi Sheiks, Frank Hutchison, Doc Watson, Blind Willie McTell and Hazel & Alice get their proper acknowledgement.

Secondly, some moderately decent news. The sheer awfulness of his singing that was so disturbing on *Good As I Been To You* is to some extent diminished, and his guitar is pretty well in tune throughout. Indeed, he gets positively frisky in places, as if practice had indeed helped to perfect and somewhere in the intervening year he'd called up the ghost of how he used to be able to do it. He sounds much more relaxed and matured. Keep on at this rate of progress and the album after next will be quite something...

No release lives in isolation. Last year's had too many expectations to live up to and so its execrable qualities caused extreme reactions. Since this one was clearly hot from no-hope city at the outset, it thus comes as a mildly pleasant relief, in places (allowing for the cold glare of modern recording and the dampening of the fires of youthful energy) it even has the snapshot qualities of those early folk scene bootleg recordings.

Two more bits of encouragement for potential purchasers. Nowhere does it stink to the depths of *Froggie Went A-Courting*. And it's better than *Self Portrait*. That's about as far as I care to go right now.

Ian Anderson

By Larry Nager  
The Commercial Appeal



He don't need a weatherman, just a hairdresser...

BOB DYLAN  
World Gone Wrong  
(Columbia/All formats)

FOLLOWING ON from his superb re-imagining of folk standards on 'Good As I Been To You', the man in the long black coat again digs up his roots and gives them a good shaking. Reworking traditional blues and country tunes on a single acoustic guitar might seem like the last refuge of a creatively bankrupt elder statesman with nothing left to say, but most of these ten tracks vibrate with a genuinely spooked vibe which has strong, organic links back to Dylan's hobo youth. They are closer in spirit to the wired young prophet from Hibbing than any of the man's recent full-band albums or Wilburys-style side projects.

Of course, the general mood is too autumnal and Dylan's own production too clean and intimate to truly revisit his gnarled back pages. As the self-penned, spectacularly incoherent sleeve notes testify, the author considers our modern era a new Dark Age and invests most of these tunes with heartbroken regret and nostalgia. The beautiful 'Delia', for instance, with its morose refrain "all the friends I ever had are gone", the exemplary 12-string finger-picking of 'Two Soldiers', the glistening strum of 'Love Henry' and the embittered swagger of 'Blood In My Eye': all world-weary, downbeat and tear-stained.

But when the ferocious moral indignation of 'Stack A Lee' kicks in, whacked along by brutally scrunched guitar and spiky harmonica bursts, with that impassioned nasal rasp sounding like an angry wasp, Dylan proves he can still turn in the best Dylan impersonation around. (7)

Stephen Dalton

Harley Davidson across the desert highway, doesn't need a blood change & would never go on a shopping spree."

McTell is also the source of *Broke Down Engine*, and the 10 songs include a couple (the title track and *Blood In My Eyes*) by the Mississippi Sheiks, the Jackson-based string band who originated *Sittin' On Top of the World*. The set also features some traditional Anglo-Saxon folk songs, *Jack-A-Roe*, *Love Henry* and a gospel song learned from Doc Watson, *Lone Pilgrim*.

While his imagination runs free in his commentary, on the songs themselves, Dylan has rarely been as focused and direct. On "World Gone Wrong," he sings like he means it, his powerful, restrained performances giving the album some of the flavor of "John Wesley Harding," resulting in one of the best Dylan albums in far too long.

BOB DYLAN  
World Gone Wrong  
(Columbia COL474857-2)

Pity poor Sony. Michael Jackson's sales prospects have nosedived, they lost out on *Bat Out Of Hell 2...* and Bob Dylan insisted on releasing a soundalike follow-up to last year's controversial, all-acoustic *Good As I Been To You*. When it rains it pours...

*World Gone Wrong* isn't so much a cloudburst as a shower, and one we might have expected. After all, the religious fervour of the late '70s took three albums to expend itself and little here suggests these ten traditional songs amount to more than a collection from the previous album sessions. The guitar-playing is amusingly hammy on first hearing, but Dylan the covers-performer is nowhere near as engaging as Dylan the singer-songwriter. Possibly the most illuminating thing is his rambling, explanatory sleeve note.

Bob Dylan imitators we've got already—but, even allowing him the right after 30 years to do as he pleases (and since when has he asked our permission?), it's time the genuine article confirmed his right to the title. ● 4

Michael Heatley

World Gone Wrong  
Bob Dylan  
Columbia

On last year's "Good As I Been To You," Dylan's acoustic set of folk standards was a bit of a throwaway, a nostalgic look back at his coffeehouse roots. But "World Gone Wrong" is a different animal. Again armed with only an acoustic guitar and his wheezing harmonica, Dylan has chosen a set of blues and folk classics whose raw, elemental imagery provided the basis for his own visionary work in the '60s. Dylan's stream-of-consciousness liner notes help show the connection, as when *Delia*, the dead "gambling girl" in Blind Willie McTell's song of the same name, is described as, "no Queen Gertrude, Elizabeth I or even Evita Peron, doesn't ride a

Bob Dylan: *World Gone Wrong* (Columbia, all formats). Say what you like about the end of the world, but it certainly brings the best out of Bob Dylan. He's decided that we're all going to hell in a handbasket, and this is his soundtrack for the trip: an all-solo acoustic album of traditional songs whose mood veers from sombre to angry. Whereas last year's superficially similar *Good As I Been to You* showed the humour and cunning that beguiled Greenwich Village 30 years ago, *World Gone Wrong* avoids any such tricks of seduction. The voice is subdued, although still incomparably subtle, flicking in an instant from the regretful reverie of "Delia" to the edgy whine of "Stack-a-lee", with many shades in between; behind it, the guitar renounces flashy fingerpicking in favour of a bluntness that recalls the most direct of the great country bluesmen. His sources include Blind Willie McTell, the New Lost City Ramblers, Doc Watson and the Mississippi Sheiks, and he does them proud in a release that may turn out to stand with *Blood on the Tracks* and *Oh Mercy* as his best since the mid-Sixties. It isn't comfortable listening, but those who think it's Bob Dylan's job to cheer us up need their heads examining, not his. Richard Williams

## RECORDINGS



PHOTOGRAPH BY RANDEE ST. NICHOLS

## MY BACK PAGES



BOB DYLAN  
WORLD GONE WRONG  
(COLUMBIA)

**T**his is Bob Dylan's second album in a row of solo performances of old folk and blues songs. Last year's *Good As I Been to You* was a nice tribute to the master's inspirations, but nothing you would go back to very often. This new one, though, deserves to be considered a major Bob Dylan album, the latest in the series of occasional lightning bolts most recently represented by *Infidels* (1983) and

*Oh Mercy* (1989). In *World Gone Wrong* Dylan demonstrates that he can say more in someone else's song than most artists can say in their own.

*Good As I Been to You* was dominated by story-songs, which when sung today emphasize the archaic aspects of traditional ballads. *World Gone Wrong* is mostly first-person narratives of love lost and eternal regrets. Beyond the fact that this gives listeners the illu-

sion of a single trustworthy narrator guiding them on their journey, the song choices emphasize the timelessness of the basic human condition. Rather than dwell on what makes old songs exotic, Dylan finds what makes them universal. Dylan has been saying for a while that there is no need for anybody to write any more songs—there are plenty! This album seems to be his way of illustrating that outrageous point. I had "Blood in

"My Eyes" appeared under Dylan's name on *Bringing It All Back Home* or *Street Legal*, we would have praised it and said that no one else can write such lyrics. Which, I suppose, is Dylan's point.

By choosing to record these old songs, Dylan also finds new (and newly appropriate) emotional colors in his increasingly craggy voice. Sinatra adopted a similar strategy in his 50s, turning the disadvantage of a more limited vocal instrument into the advantage of a more expressive emotional range. When Dylan sings, in this version of "Delia," "All the friends I ever had are gone," it breaks your heart. His world-worn voice reveals the cracks behind his stoicism in a way that this most unsentimental of singers would never allow in his lyrics. The weight of nobility and loss are as appropriate to this older Dylan's singing as anger and hunger were to the snarl of his youth.

Bob Dylan is probably the greatest talent to have come out of rock 'n' roll. In fact, rock owes much of its legitimacy to having been the form that Bob Dylan chose to use (Imagine if Dylan had "gone polka" at Newport in '65! All those kids would be hammering on accordions today). However, it has been a long time since Dylan has made the best records or done the best work in rock 'n' roll. It seems that, like a great painter, he can only give us what he is feeling at the moment his work is captured. If the tape recorder is running on a good day, we get *Blood on the Tracks*. If it's a bad day we get *Under the Red Sky*. What Dylan will not do is record a song, even a great song, if it is not true to what he is experiencing at that time. So he will leave "Blind Willie McTell" or "Series of Dreams" sitting in a closet while releasing "Wiggle Wiggle." Dylan may tell tall tales until every last journalist gives up and goes home, but he seems to be incapable of lying in his music.

Like Van Morrison and Neil Young, Dylan cannot be forced to betray his instincts now because he had a lot of success (and achieved financial security) during that brief opening when the businessmen didn't know what was going on and music slipped out of their control for a decade or so. Because he got away with making *art* then, it is too late to convince Dylan that it can't be gotten away with. So he does what he does and we can take it or leave it. In the last decade much of Dylan's recorded work has been for True Believers only. But *World Gone Wrong* is for anyone with ears to listen and a heart to feel.

—Bill Flanagan

#### BOB DYLAN: *World Gone Wrong* (CBS 474857 2)

DYLAN'S 39th album is a bleak sequel to last year's acoustic set, *Good As I Been To You*. Again, he's alone in the studio with his guitar, scratchy-sounding harmonica and a fistful of ballads. Most of them are so obscure that Dylan has had to pen liner notes explaining the origin of each, although puzzling through his cryptic notations is a job in itself. The 10 numbers are pretty gloomy, and the singer's almost parodically nasal delivery doesn't help. Only the haunting Jack-A-Roe is encumbered by what you might recognise as a tune; in fact, the title track and several others may as well be object lessons in dissonance. No doubt Dylan has his reasons for paying another visit to the music of his youth — is it that, after 35 years, the creative well has run dry?

**BOB DYLAN *World Gone Wrong* (Columbia COL 474857)** Like 1992's *Good As I Been To You*, *World Gone Wrong* takes Dylan full circle to the antique folk ballads and blues he heard and sang in the Greenwich Village clubs of the early Sixties. It's a more resonant record than its predecessor, its almost relentlessly gloomy selections better suited to Dylan's parched wreck of a voice. At times fragile and touching, the effect on the likes of Willie McTell's 'Broken Down Engine' is harrowing, and when the grizzled bard pipes up that he 'don't mind dying', you sense that, contrary to some of his recent albums, he ain't bluffing.

#### *World Gone Wrong*—Bob Dylan (Columbia)\*\*\*\*

A welcome return to form, in which yer man covers some of his favourite folk and blues songs on acoustic guitar. 'Interesting' sleeve-notes by Dylan shed some light on his choice, and on the whole his cracked, world-weary voice and distinctive playing makes this album rank amongst his finest.

● **BOB DYLAN:** *World Gone Wrong* (Columbia). Depending on your point of view, Bob Dylan has either run right out of original songwriting ideas or he has discovered a new lease of life by going back to basics. Those old folkies who never forgave him for going electric in the first place will love this. Last year's *Good As I Been To You* was his first acoustic album for 30 years and here he provides more of the same with another collection of traditional folk songs. His voice starts out thinner and reedier than usual but seems to warm to the task, while the guitar picking is better than ever.

#### *World Gone Wrong* (CBS)

Bob Dylan ★★

Never one to court popularity, Dylan continues to plug away at acoustic blues in this obvious follow-up to the less than critically acclaimed *Good As I Been To You*. Acoustic is making a comeback, we hear.

Maybe. This certainly won't do much to advance the cause. But Dylan always was happiest doing his own thing. The songs aren't his, the delivery unmistakably so. He has taken himself back down Highway 61 to the old country blues of the Delta and his delivery has all the rasp and burr of that genre. The discordant patches and grinding nasal delivery are counterbalanced by one or two diamonds.

What's the album like overall? John Wesley Harding with attitude, perhaps. It won't be a major album in his long repertoire, but there are quiet pleasures hidden here.

#### ACROSS THE BORDERLINE

Willie Nelson

Columbia

#### WORLD GONE WRONG

Bob Dylan

Columbia

A GRAND TOUR of contemporary song, Willie Nelson's latest finds him showcasing wonders by such writers as Paul Simon, Lyle Lovett, Bob Dylan and himself — and dueting with Dylan, Sinéad O'Connor and Bonnie Raitt. Wise to the folk ways that underlie this music, he lends each gem his sympathetic personality — but so subtly that the songs appear to soar on their own wings.

When Nelson sings with O'Connor on Peter Gabriel's "Don't Give Up," his gentleness is, as always, startling; he's also terrific riding Mose Allison's jazz piano on Willie Dixon's "I Love the Life I Live." A sumptuous feast, *Across the Borderline* balances the stark guitar-and-voice ardor of *Who'll Buy My Memories?* (1991); both bespeak a master's revival.

"The same hand that led me through scenes most severe/Has calmly assisted me home," Bob Dylan sings on "Lone Pilgrim," one of the traditional folk marvels that make *World Gone Wrong* a fitting follow-up to last year's *Good As I Been To You* and another remarkably strong showing. That guiding hand could signify the American muse that has motivated all his work: By returning to Blind Willie McTell, "Stack a Lee" and such obscure outfits as the Mississippi Sheiks, Dylan reclaims the origins of his own poetry. And it's lovely that in his full maturity he has achieved what had always seemed his proper fate: He's a genius blues singer, oracular and timeless.

# WORLD BEATER



**BOB DYLAN: "World Gone Wrong" (Columbia)**

MUSIC CAN do more than entertain. It can change the way you feel towards the world. And sometimes it can change the way you live. I've met people in Germany, Franco, Britain, America, in Summerhill, Dublin, and in the most rural of rural Ireland whose lives were changed by Bob Dylan's music. And I'm proud to say that Dylan changed my life. He awoke in me a love of words, a love of justice, a love of the Blues, a love of the Independent mind and an understanding of art as a source of beauty and respite.

The world may be gone wrong but for Dylan the circle remains intact. He's back where he started, back in the world where the Blues took root. He's back with his guitar, harmonica and voice. He's back with the traditions. He's back to find the well.

We make art to reflect natural beauty or to escape man-made decay. They chased with dogs the slave who tried to escape, but they did not chase the Blues because they did not know the Blues. The Blues was the bird that flew. And because

for so many Blacks it was their only bird, they loved and took care of it and made it into a winged one for their passion and dreams. You see, the Blues is so much more than music. It is the history, the literature, the paintings, the sculpture, the plays, the loves, hopes, fears, hates and aspirations of a rich and rhythmical culture.

The Black would-be doctor, scientist, writer, the Black genius, played guitar and harmonica and sung their way through. The Black genius turned to the Blues because they had no future but the blues, and had nothing else to lose. So, they gave everything to the Blues. So, it's no surprise that a young Bob Dylan in love with music would turn to the Blues too. And to the White niggers, the White Trash, to folk like Woody Guthrie.

And it's no surprise that an older Bob Dylan should return. It's been a long journey, and wisdom has been gained and squandered, and all in the world does indeed seem to have gone wrong. Songs like 'World Gone Wrong', 'Broke Down Engine', 'Blood In My Eye', 'Stack A Lee' and 'Jack-A-Roe' never promised to right the world. They were hymns to a world already gone wrong. They were laments for love gone wrong. But however they were meant there is one thing certain; these songs have their place today, because new technology will never replace them, nor will new ideas or melodies ever surpass them. And Dylan does them justice — a justice their songsmiths never got — like he did their comrades justice back on his first album, *Bob Dylan*. Perhaps that's what justice is about?

• Gerry McGovern



**BOB DYLAN**  
**World Gone Wrong**  
COLUMBIA COL 474857

"I don't carry myself yet the way that Big Joe Williams, Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly and Lightnin' Hopkins have carried themselves. I hope to be able to someday, but they're older people. . . ." Bob Dylan admitted, in 1962. Thirty years on, the impression Dylan made on David Was, co-producer of *Under The Red Sky*, is a telling one: "He had the sort of primitive naivety of a so-called blues artist," Was observed. "I was surprised to find that core beneath the sophisticated exterior. This is a blues man, y'know."

Presently, word has it, although Bob's cleaner than he's been in quite some time, his songwriting muse is refusing to come no matter how many times he calls. Hence, presumably, *Good As I Been To You*, last year's acoustic grab-bag of folk/blues covers, and now, more of the same. *Ragged And Dirty* is a match for the first album's *You're Gonna Quit Me*, *Stack-A-Lee* is a Frankie And Albert equivalent, *Love Henry* a partner for *Black Jack Davey*, and so on. Dylan flatpicks skilfully throughout, and what little

harmonica he blows, he blows well.

How Dylan sings on this record is another matter. Though in his latest shows his voice has been surprisingly strong and flexible, here he's chosen to assume a tired monotone throughout. The doleful mode is entirely appropriate for such songs as *World Gone Wrong*, *Blind Willie McTell's Broke Down Engine*, and the LP's slow, lascivious highlight, *Blood In My Eyes*, but the dreariness of delivery does no favours for *Two Brothers*, which has often been performed to much better effect in concert, or for the longer murder ballad, *Love Henry*, the drama of the narrative demanding more involvement of its singer than is delivered here.

With welcome, self-penned liner notes that are at once deadly serious, berating the moral bankruptcy of the world and its ways, and wryly whimsical, *World Gone Wrong* is as good as, though no better than, *Good As I Been To You*. If he chose to, Dylan could produce three or four such albums every month for the next hundred years or so. But who'd buy them? Well, OK, I guess. . . . ★ ★ ★

John Bauldie

# "Hear this man do it, and take courage."

By Robert Wyatt

I JUST REALISED, THIS MOJO IS MEANT TO BE about rock'n'roll, so I'm shafted before I start, really. I like to roll with the best of them, but the rock face feels too flinty to me, the backbeat that an idiot couldn't lose. So what are my qualifications, or Dylan's for that matter?

Well, I did shell out for a Chuck Berry cassette at Tesco's a couple of weeks ago, and *Broke Down Engine* from this *World Gone Wrong* record could almost be one of the tunes on it. There's no rhythm section on the Dylan album, though; if you want that, you could just thump along on the table-top with Dylan's rhythm guitar, reverse karaoke style. But before I get stuck in . . . all I really want to say is . . . order this from your local municipal library's record department now. (CDs etc are far too expensive, and it's not as if the musicians get most of the money.)

*World Gone Wrong* is a beautiful record by a beautiful man. Readers in a hurry, I have to tell you: that's the review, really. The rest is indulgent speculation. Like a lot of our timeless heritage, folk music as a form was invented in the 19th century — in this case by a German musicologist who was getting his lederhosen in a twist, mourning the destruction of rural culture by the all-engulfing hell of the industrial revolution.

The English-speaking tradition, or at least what I've come across of it,

**BOB DYLAN**

*World Gone Wrong*

COLUMBIA

was word-based, and that's been its fundamental limitation, musically. (Maybe real authorities like Karl Dallas and Ian A. Anderson would balk at that. I dunno.) I do know that, as a lad just getting into my teens while Robert Zimmerman was already getting out of his, I could hardly breathe under what felt like the dead weight of the sex-free rhythms, the solemn tremolo, the heavy pauses for emphasis of significant words, the hushed and reverent gatherings. And even worse, the desperate, flushed lurches into

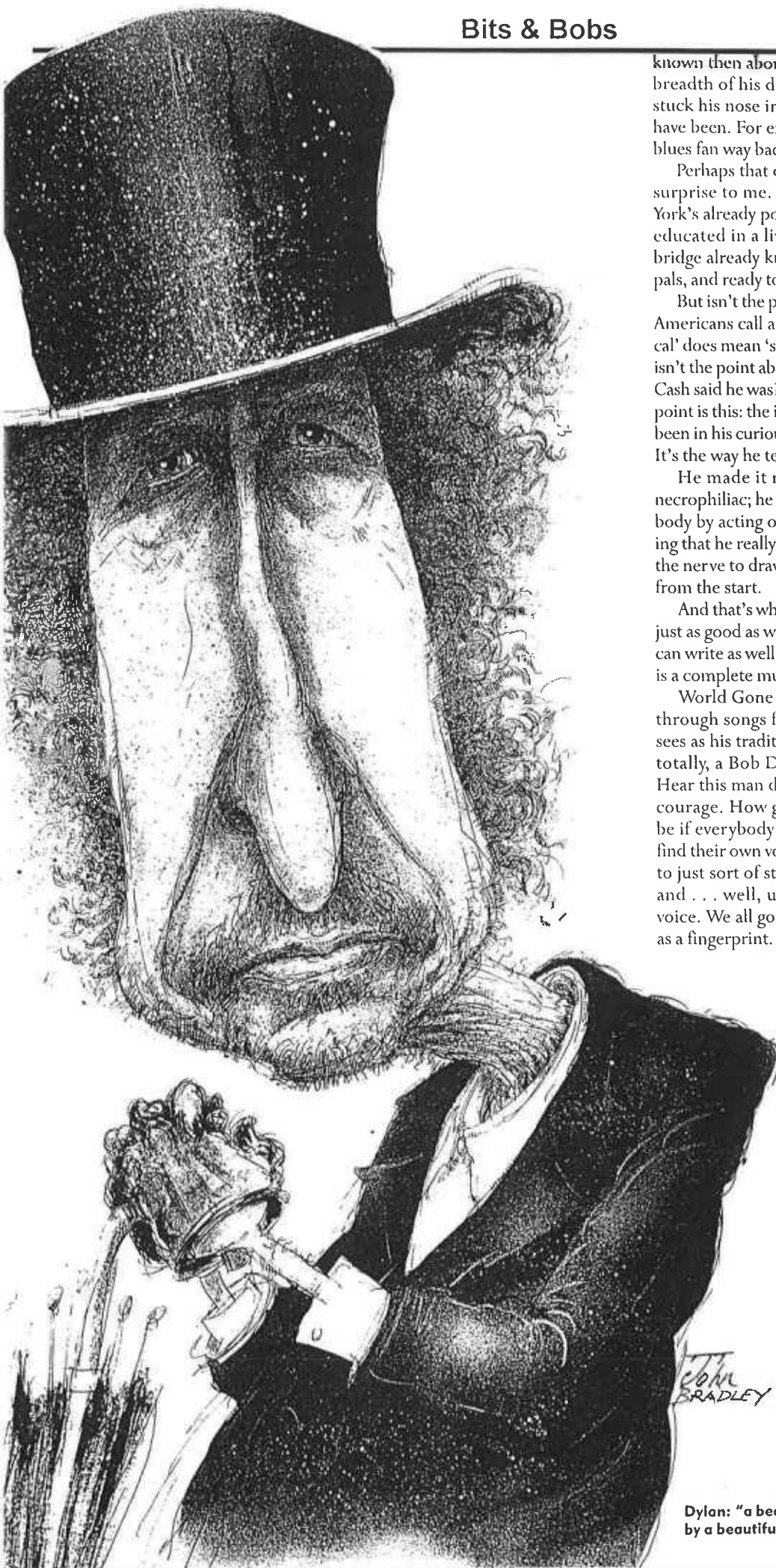
Shakespearean mirth. All so uncool!

Don't get me wrong, I don't remember feeling rebellious against it, or wanting to hear fellow adolescents share their teenage angst with me; nor was I easy prey for the new-generation-as-a-tribe marketers. I was too wary for that. It's just that in the search for musical and cultural stimulus, 'folk music' gave me harmonic claustrophobia.

But of course I didn't know the half of it, and researchers with ears more blessed than mine had already brought precious gold up from rich seams where I'd only seen the dull earth on the surface. In Britain, A.L. Lloyd begat Annie Briggs and Dick Gaughan; in America Alan Lomax led, in a way, to Leadbelly, to Woody Guthrie, to Bob Dylan. The term 'melting pot', may be a cliché, but it's not a bad metaphor for American culture.

Watching a recent telly film exploring Highway 61, I found out that I could, after all, have identified with the schoolboy Zimmerman if I'd





known then about his early 'reference library' and the breadth of his discoveries. Apparently, he never just stuck his nose in the archives, valuable as they might have been. For example, he was a right little rhythm & blues fan way back.

Perhaps that doesn't surprise you, but it was a nice surprise to me. This bloke then descended on New York's already potent folk revival, well tooled-up, self-educated in a living folk culture, ready to cross the bridge already knocked up by Woody Guthrie and his pals, and ready to revitalise old people's fading dreams.

But isn't the point about Bob Dylan that he was what Americans call a 'radical'? An original? Well... 'radical' does mean 'starting again from the root'. And then, isn't the point about him that he is a poet, just as Johnny Cash said he was? Well, no, I don't think it is. I think the point is this: the innovation, if you like, is and always has been in his curiously modest and unpretentious singing. It's the way he tells them, that makes it all his own.

He made it new because he wasn't just another necrophiliac; he didn't embarrass the shit out of everybody by acting out some pious reverie, or by pretending that he really was the son of Victoria Spivey. He had the nerve to draw on history as a living stew-pot. Right from the start.

And that's why, when he sings from the tradition, it's just as good as when he uses his own compositions. He can write as well as anybody, but he doesn't have to. He is a complete musician.

World Gone Wrong finds Dylan strumming again through songs from what he sees as his tradition. It is still, totally, a Bob Dylan record. Hear this man do it, and take courage. How great it could be if everybody struggling to find their own voice were able to just sort of stop struggling and... well, use their own voice. We all got one, unique as a fingerprint.

TRACKS

**World Gone Wrong** is an all-acoustic album of traditional songs. The following quotes and track information are culled from Dylan's own sleeve-note.

**World Gone Wrong**

"Done by the Mississippi Sheiks... all their songs are raw to the bone."

**Love Henry**

"A 'traditionalist' ballad. Tom Paley used to do it."

**Ragged & Dirty**

"One of the Willie Browns did this... heavy moral vocabulary."

**Blood In My Eyes**

"By the Mississippi Sheiks... rebellion against routine seems to be their strong theme."

**Broke Down Engine**

"A Blind Willie McTell masterpiece."

**Delia**

"One sad tale... seems to be about counterfeit loyalty."

**Stack A Lee**

"Frank Hutchinson's version... it says no man gains immortality thru public acclaim."

**Two Soldiers**

"Jerry Garcia showed me 'Two Soldiers'... battle song extraordinaire."

**Jack-A-Roe**

"Another Tom Paley ballad... the young virgin follows her heart."

**Lone Pilgrim**

"From an old Doc Watson record."

PRODUCED BY BOB DYLAN

Dylan: "a beautiful record by a beautiful man."

## Yet another side of Bob Dylan

ISABEL BING (editor): "Bob Dylan: A Estrada Revisitada" (\$23 IMO/Eurocheque inc. registered airmail from G. v.d. Vorst, Mozartlaan 23, 5654 EK Eindhoven, Netherlands)



Despite the postal address, this book hails from Brazil, where (as all good linguists will know) they speak Portuguese. And it's in that language that 82 of Dylan's song lyrics appear, alongside their English equivalents, in a tome that's likely to be irrelevant to all but Dylan completists, and Brazilians. There's a cursory Brazilian discography at the back, but the main attraction is Dylan's words — everything from "A Auto-Estrada 61 Revisitada" to "A Solitária Morte De Hattie Carroll". As the Portuguese say, "Você chega quase a pensar que está vendo duplo" — and to find out where that line comes from, you'll have to buy the book. (PD)

### Dylan 'Rolling' with the times

The times they are a'changing, and Bob Dylan is changing with 'em. For the first time, Dylan, 50, has allowed one of his songs to be sampled for a hip-hop version. Mystery Tramps, a San Francisco band, got the OK to use parts of Dylan's original recording of "Like a Rolling Stone" in the making of their rendition. Special Rider Music, the Dylan-owned music publishing house, gave the formal permission. The track is scheduled to be released Aug. 27. Bill Cutler, guitarist and producer of the hip-hop "Like a Rolling Stone," said that Dylan has a relationship to hip-hop because "Bob, being a street poet, was the first rapper."



DYLAN

— Dan Aquilante

HOW best to headline a story about overpriced tickets for a Bob Dylan show? With a wry "It Ain't Free Babe"? Or with the more assertive "Pay Lady Pay"? Or perhaps a moderately ironic "Times They Are Expensive"?

*Rolling Stone* magazine plumped for the rather disapproving "Positively Wall Street" when reporting on what they saw as the extortionate asking price for Dylan tickets at the Hollywood Bowl — "top price was a whopping and obscene \$65".

Give the guy a break! Perhaps Dylan — now just a little more than seven years from his 60th birthday — has become worried by the fact that his unique position does not carry a pension. Perhaps we will soon find him appearing in one of those advertisements where the horrible truth about his job's insecurity gradually dawns on a carefree young man.

"They tell me that being the man who liberates pop's mind doesn't carry a pension," the young Dylan will say, wreathed in smiles and curls, his acoustic guitar slung over his shoulder. Woody Guthrie cap perched at a jaunty angle.

Then there will be the electric Dylan, older and more guarded, poker-faced in leather and shades. "Yeah, I hear that being the man who liberates pop's mind doesn't carry a pension," he will deadpan.

And finally there will be Dylan in his recent incarnation as crazed gypsy troubadour, frowning behind three-day non-designer stubble and wonky eyeliner. "Oh, how I wish that being the man who liberates pop's brain carried a pension," he'll groan. "Better put up the prices for that Hollywood Bowl gig."

Dylan still has some way to go before his tickets reach the same price range as Frank Sinatra, whom some of us willingly shelled out £75 to see the last time he played the Albert Hall. And, despite his position as the greatest pioneer in popular music, he has even further to go before he makes it to the top of the



TONY PARSONS

*Forbes* chart of the highest earners in show business. *Forbes*, the American business magazine, have just published their earnings chart covering income in the entertainment industry over the

last two years.

*Forbes* reports that the individual musician who made the most money in this period is Prince, at number five in the chart with income of £32.7 million. This surprised me because, like Dylan, Prince has been hugely influential but rarely sets the charts on fire. Perhaps his income is so high because he releases records with such alarming regularity. Or perhaps he has a paper round we don't know about.

Those bitch-slapping bad boys Guns N' Roses are at number four with £35.3 million, and then the top three positions are occupied by the holy trinity of American television and film — Bill Cosby with £44 million, Steven Spielberg with £48 million and Oprah Winfrey at number one with £65.3 million, who has beaten off stiff opposition because her rather wonderful show is currently

seen in 64 countries and because she owns the rights to the programme outright. Winfrey is the first woman to top the *Forbes* chart.

Michael Jackson has dropped out of the top 10, to number 12, but U2 are at number eight, with earnings of £31.3 million.

Some names are conspicuous by their absence. Mike Tyson was always on the *Forbes* list a few years ago, but his income has slipped recently because there's not much money in sewing mailbags. But another old *Forbes* favourite, cartoonist Charles Schulz, is at number six with £32 million. Peanuts? Hardly.

But the week's most shocking financial news comes from New York City where sightings have been reported of a street vendor hawking copies of Madonna's coffee-table porn book *Sex* for just one dollar. One dollar! If this is true then the Material Girl's career could be on the verge of a collapse of almost Donny Osmond-like proportions.

Is he worried that he won't get a pension?



# Bob Dylan's songs bespeak the American experience

By Andrew Ward

I don't attend rock concerts very often. I like some rock and roll, but I'm a little deaf in one ear already, and I like to sit down. Nothing makes me feel older than fretting over my eardrums and having to stand in order to see over the dazed girl who always stands in front of me at rock concerts, languidly waving her wrists. Or let me put it this way: Nothing makes me feel older than having not to mind standing in order to see over the dazed girl in front of me.

But a buddy called me a couple of nights ago to say that he'd been offered two complimentary backstage tickets to a Bob Dylan concert and wanted to know if I might like to tag along. I said I would.

I have never been entirely in sync with Bob Dylan. He keeps changing on me. When I was in high school I was what they called a "folky," a term whose similarity to fogey is not entirely coincidental. One day I escorted a girl to a Dylan concert on Long Island, expecting Dylan to stand alone with his acoustic guitar and harmonica brace, rasping his anthems across the vast stadium. Instead, he showed up with a rock band and shouted autonomous, headlong songs over the jeers of my fellow folkies. I might have jeered too except that my companion was smarter than I and knew that we had stumbled into a historic moment in the history of American music.

That was over 25 years ago, and Dylan has been pulling the rug out from under me ever since. I remember some years ago walking through the Picasso retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art and watching, as if by time-lapse pho-



Bob Dylan

tography, as Picasso hit on a style and perfected it. And then near the exit in each chronologically arranged gallery, you could see him almost contemptuously mess it up, clearing the decks for his next incarnation.

Dylan has followed the same procedure: No sooner would I concede that he deserved Woody Guthrie's mantle than he would appear in a leather jacket with a rock band. No sooner would I accept his new-found Jewish orthodoxy than he would proclaim himself born-again, or maybe it was the other way around.

It turned out the tickets were neither complimentary nor backstage. But by the time we reached the theater I was too charmed by the prospect of seeing Bob Dylan again to begrudge the \$20 tab. As I found my seat I was smart enough this time not to pretend to know what to expect and protective enough of

my delicate sensibilities to leave my seat and wait in the lobby until the opening band, barely into its teens, had finished strutting and preening through a sequence of contrived and badly milked tantrums.

Then, among an assortment of other senior citizens, I filed back in to hear Bob Dylan. The grooves in his cheeks were deeper, there was a little extra wattle to his neck, but he didn't look much worse for wear, considering the life I'm told he had led. There was his customary scrawny earnestness in performance, simultaneously elderly and adolescent. There was his wavering kazoo of a voice, as obdurate and distinctive as a cartoon character's, rustling the foliage in the vicinity of his old tunes. There was the guitar strumming that a quarter-century has not improved and the perversely clumsy harp solos that make you wonder sometimes if he can walk and chew gum at the same time.

Yet, whether or not he has gathered any moss, in each of Dylan's songs there are traces of each of his incarnations, and his music has become a reconciliation of all of them — prairie, delta, ghetto, barrio — almost the full amplitude of the American experience.

I don't know why Americans lately don't seem to care very much what any candidate has to tell them. But it appeared to me as though there wasn't a soul in the crowd who wouldn't have agreed with me that you can keep every speech of the last quarter-century, just so long as you leave us these songs.

*Andrew Ward, a writer and former NPR commentator who now lives in the West, wrote this article for the Washington Post.*

## Quote of the day

Bob Dylan has pungent advice for wannabe songwriters: Make songs meaningful and make them technically sound. He said:

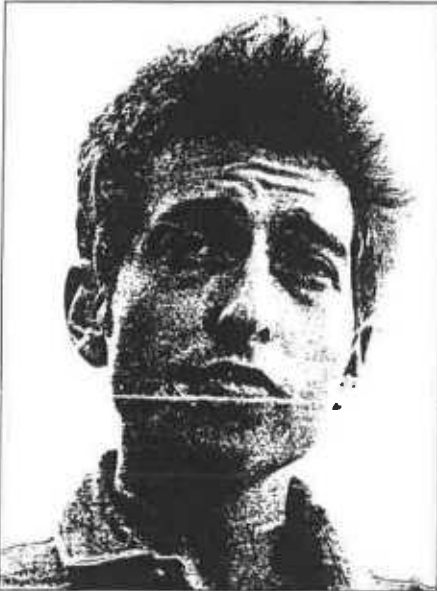
**"If nobody wrote any songs from this day on, the world ain't gonna suffer for it unless someone . . . has something to say. You're better off learning some music theory, rather than just take a hillbilly twang and try to base it all on that."**

## ④ BLOWING THE WIND

Eric Winter once interviewed Bob Dylan. Or did he? Read on...

I was asked recently "Is it true that you were the first person in Britain to interview Bob Dylan?"

Well you *could* say that I did. At the time (1962), I was folk critic of *Melody Maker*. Dylan was known in Britain by a few score people who had heard him in the U.S.A., a few hundred who had heard his first album, and possibly slightly more his second – neither was launched here with any great hype.



Mr. Zimmerman. "Yep" and "Nope".

Andrew Oldham (a younger, less famous Andrew Oldham) telephoned me: would I like to talk to Bob Dylan? I agreed to meet them in the early evening at the Cumberland Hotel in London. Believe me, I had been very impressed by those two records and was more than glad of a chance to meet Dylan.

In the bar of the hotel, Andrew bought me a drink and we started to chat. I asked Dylan if he was glad to be in England. He said: "Yep". Would he be here for long? He said: "Nope". What did he think of the British folk scene? He said nothing. During the next thirty minutes or so, I found that he answered where he could with a yep or a nope: when the question demanded more than a yep/nope answer, he said nothing.

The bar was starting to fill up. Andrew suggested we might go to Bob's room. Bob seemed to approve of the idea. He stood up and walked away purposefully, without a word, without a backward glance. Andrew and I followed him to the lift. In the lift and along the hotel corridor, Andrew said: "He's not really like this. He's not usually like this." He said it several times. The words were sometimes different but the message was the same.

Into the hotel room, more drinks, more questions. Did he have any plans for a new record? "Nope." Was he likely to tour Europe? "Nope." What kind of reception had he had in England? Silence.

Andrew Oldham was plainly discomfited. Poor chap. It wasn't his fault. More drinks, more yeps, more nopes, more silence. Dylan had taken a key from his jeans pocket. It was attached to a simple ring. Dylan slipped the ring over his finger, began to spin the key round and round – compulsively, I thought.

I think it might well have been Bob who broke the pattern. "I'm hungry", he said. "Why don't we have dinner?" said Andrew. Bob got up, pushed his finger through the small cord hanger at the collar of his jacket, draped the jacket over his left shoulder. He stalked (I think that's the word) towards the lift, he stalked towards the hotel dining-room, he sat down.

He picked up a menu, not gently; impatiently, rather. He stared at it for a full two minutes. He spoke tonelessly: "I'm having steak and chips."

Andrew and I ordered. The food came. Dylan ate in silence. For the most part, so did Andrew and I. We finished eating and Dylan rose. We had all finished, but I got the feeling that it wouldn't have mattered if we hadn't finished. Back to the room. More questions, more yeps, more nopes, more keyring spinning. After a while, I left.

Well, that's it. Next day I had a column to fill. When I got home, I took out the two Dylan discs and read the sleeve notes a couple of times.

Next day, to help me, I cobbled the column together from the information on the sleeves, supplemented by three yeps and two nopes. At this remove, I find it incredible that I wrote the column that way. When Woody Guthrie was a reporter covering the picket lines at various strikes across the U.S.A., he put down the immortal words: "All you can write is what you see."

I should have heeded Woody's words. I should have told it like it was – just as I finally have now. I have never before written this story down, but I've told it several times over the coffee cups or the late-night drinks. Once or twice someone (a journalist, a folkie) asked me: "Was Dylan stoned?" D'y'e'know, it's a question that had never entered my mind until it was put there.

Of course, I don't know the answer. But ask me for an opinion and I'll tell you: No, I don't think he was stoned. Out of his mind, perhaps, but not stoned. Possibly, just a little unmarbled.



## Bob And Weave

When we last checked on Bob Dylan, the mumbling mega-star had wrapped his head in a babushka, making him look a lot like his grandmother from Flatbush with a beard. Well, apparently, Sally Kirkland found the look irresistible because, we hear, the two have been running around together like a couple of rolling stones.

Yes, it's true. Bob and Sally (perhaps Broadway's first naked actress) have been together for quite some time now and, we understand, picking up where they left off after a brief fling back in the '60s. We're not sure exactly what these two do in their spare time, but we know from a close source that Dylan supposedly paid her airfare so she could accompany him on the road during his recent tour. And there she was backstage at Jones Beach, the Garden State Arts Center as well as his West Coast gigs in Costa Mesa and San Jose. "It's true," a source close to Sally told us. "Though Bob gets upset whenever someone insinuates it."



Bob Dylan and Coopers & Lybrand: selling out the 1960s

## Coopers a-changing

The pop industry bemoaned the final death of the 1960s last week when it was revealed that Bob Dylan had sold the right to use *The times they are a-changing* as the backing track to a TV advert which celebrates the US arm

of Coopers & Lybrand's inestimable talents.

But what of the UK arm? Perhaps Beatles classics may be more up their street.

Notwithstanding that *Taxman* from the *Revolver* album is undoubtedly already the anthem of the firm's tax division, one wonders whether Polly Peck administrator Michael Jordan and sidekick Richard Stone ought not do a high-kicking rendition of *Everybody's got something to hide except me and*

*my monkey* from the group's double album.

But for the firm in general, given their support for the late Cap'n Bob, perhaps a more apt ditty might come from the *Abbey Road* album - *Maxwell's silver hammer*.

Of its meaning, Paul McCartney once said: 'This song epitomises the down-falls in life. Just when everything is going smoothly, "bang, bang", down comes Maxwell's silver hammer and ruins everything.' Quite.

**Bob**



Homer, the slut

Issue Eleven

ENCORE

# Knockin' on Heaven's Door

BY BOB CANNON

After his 1966  
motorcycle crash,  
Bob Dylan  
sought shelter  
from the storm  
of his fame



**TWIST OF FATE:**  
Dylan first rode a  
bike at the Newport  
Folk Festival in '64  
(above, with Bob  
Siggins). A '68 Woody  
Guthrie tribute  
brought him out of  
seclusion (below).

**B**Y 1966, BOB Dylan's fans had grown used to listening to his evocative lyrics and wondering where his head was at. But after his near-fatal motorcycle accident on July 29 of that year, they spent 18 months wondering where his head—and the rest of him—had gone.

Early that morning, Dylan, 25, was taking his Triumph 500 to be repaired near his Woodstock, N.Y., home when he hit an oil slick. He flew over the handlebars, suffering cracked vertebrae, a concussion, and multiple bruises. But his release from Middletown Hospital a week later didn't soothe fans' fears. That's because Dylan simply and utterly disappeared.

When his 60-concert tour, scheduled to start Aug. 6, was canceled, rumors took wing: Dylan was dead, disfigured, paralyzed, or a vegetable.



His editor at Macmillan Publishing didn't help: He announced that the singer's novel, *Tarantula*, would be delayed because "he couldn't use his eyes for a period of time."

The accident came just as pressure and personal excess threatened to consume Dylan. After bursting onto the folk scene five years earlier, he had reached pop stardom with three albums and three singles in the top 10—but was becoming increasingly grim and taciturn on stage and off. In *Don't Look Back*, the documentary of his 1965 tour, he appeared tense and belligerent, fueled by adrenaline and, reportedly, amphetamines.

It turned out his recuperation and retreat gave him a reprieve from desolation row. Taking the opportunity to nest in Woodstock, he and The Band recorded what would become (when released in 1975)

*The Basement Tapes*. Upstairs, he devoted himself to his family: wife, Sara; their son, Jesse, born in January, 1966; and Sara's daughter, Maria. Giving his first postaccident interview in May 1967, Dylan elliptically alluded to his absence: "Something has got to be evened up is all I'm going to say."

Something, at least, was restored. The Bob Dylan who reemerged on Jan. 20, 1968, for two joyous Woody Guthrie tributes at Carnegie Hall, was no longer irascible, but genial and open. That month he released *John Wesley Harding*, whose simplicity reflected a newfound serenity. "I'm a country boy myself," he said at the time, "and you have to be let alone to really accomplish anything." ♦

## TIME CAPSULE

### July 29, 1966

MOVIEGOERS lionized *Born Free*, while the TV audience spied *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* in the top spot. Cornelius Ryan's *The Last Battle* was the No. 1 nonfiction book, and Sinatra's *Strangers in the Night* was the best-selling LP.



Bob Dylan and Tom Petty at Bobfest '92.

## BOBFEST REVISITED

Greil Marcus sings the praises of the  
video release of *Bob Dylan:*  
*The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration.*

You don't look to mass extravaganza concerts — artist after artist trooping across the stage in tribute, in memorium, or bowing to some good cause — for real music. The artifacts such concerts leave behind are just souvenirs. Even legendary Woodstock produced only a single number that's still talked about: The last song played, Jimi Hendrix's version of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

When more than a score of stars gathered at Madison Square Garden on October 16, 1992, to play Bob Dylan's songs and thank him for supposedly putting a head on the body of popular music, it would have made sense to expect what a lot of people in fact came up with: respectful or wrong-headed or satisfying turns by the likes of Eric Clapton, John Mellencamp, or Willie Nelson. There was no reason to expect that time and again people would step forward and, reaching for something in a Bob Dylan song that had never quite been heard before, leave their own careers in the dust. It was a shock then and it's a shock now.

Sound recordings are just a map here; the two-video package is the territory. You can hear what Johnny Winter — backed, as were most others this night, by the in-your-dreams combination of Booker T. and the M.G.s plus drummers Jim Keltner and

Anton Fig — does with "Highway 61 Revisited," but you can't exactly hear his performance. The sound is sardonic, hip, fast, uproarious, just as it was on *Second Winter*, the great lost album of 1970. But it's Winter's appearance that takes the song to other worlds. On he comes, impossibly thin, his arms covered with tattoos of hex signs and hoodoo symbols, tattoos that look more like Kaposi's sarcoma than anything else, tattoos that seem to have eaten away most of the flesh on the sticks he's apparently intending to play his guitar with.

This is a pagan apparition. The song is going to begin with "God said to Abraham kill me a son," but Winter looks as if he's already died. Then out of nowhere, as Winter stands still, his mouth closed, you hear weird hollers and moans. It's as if the song knows what's coming, and it's flinching, as if the song doesn't want to play itself. But Winter is only tuning up. He does play the song, rams through it, leaves.

Who was that masked man?

Lou Reed doesn't look as if he's going to do anything odd. Dressed in black (big surprise), wearing glasses, more or less a graduate student, he comes out to sing "Foot of Pride," a tune Dylan left off his 1983 album *Infidels*. It's a very long song: two or three hundred verses, about half a million words. Reed reads them off a music stand. This is quite distracting until Reed hits the first chorus; then the biblical curse of the number hits home. The huge roar that emanates from the stage doesn't seem tied to any individual; the vertigo the sound creates is a vertigo of rising, not falling. Reed could be standing on his head now for all you'd care. He's created a monster and now he's riding it.

Heard today on *John Wesley Harding*, "All Along the Watchtower" is cool, sinister, a tale about limbo told in Purgatory: "Two riders were approaching / The wind began to howl," it ends, leaving the listener in a

wasteland. Jimi Hendrix's version of the windstorm has been riding the airwaves for 25 years; it's probably the strongest cover of a Dylan song anyone has ever produced.

Nell Young steps out to prove the song has just begun to speak. As Jon Landau once said about Wilson Pickett's "In the Midnight Hour" (perhaps Booker T. and the M.G.s finest hour), this is not a classic, it's an epic. "All along the watchtower," Young says to himself again and again after he's all but ended the performance, as if the power of the image has just hit him. It's all modern war, what he's done with the song; go back and listen to Dylan's version after Young's and it's like hearing Robert Johnson for the first time, a man who died before you were born in a place you'll never get to, exiled by the fact that you'll never catch up with him.

All of this, though, is merely art. What happens with Roger McGuinn and "Mr. Tambourine Man" is something else: real life, the transformation of a man before your very eyes. Looking fine and just a bit uncertain, at once proud and shy, he strides out to join Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. He launches into the song with the same ringing Rickenbacker 12-string notes and the same fey, Beach Boys voice that made it a hit in 1965. But then he passes the single verse the Byrds used all those years ago, and lunges for the next one.

He is a different person. The voice is thicker; the body rocks back and forth. There's a vehemence here that no one has ever heard from this man before. On the "and" in "And if you hear vague traces," his voice lifts into the air and the word fragments, then floats down as pieces of some ancient Scots ballad, but McGuinn is already making the hard consonants of the next words into weapons, a blacksmith with "of skkkktipping reels of rhyme" — the performance is cruel, heedless, vengeance for a crime that isn't named.

That act — that vengeance — is something you can hear all through the work of Bob Dylan. Of course, he once said that all of his songs end with "good luck." You can hear that, too: There are a lot of good smiles on the *30th Anniversary* videos, but the best of them comes almost at the end, when Bob Dylan and everyone else have finished with "Knockin' on Heaven's Door." The taciturn mask Dylan has worn for the last numbers of the concert breaks; just barely, he seems to acknowledge that he might have heard something he hadn't heard before, even in his head. ☺



## Accounting firm uses a classic theme

**T**he tag line in accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand's new TV ad says: "From the industries that have built the economy to the ones that will, there's one firm with the vision, insight and courage to help you seize opportunity in a changing world."

Perhaps that's just what **Bob Dylan** had in mind 30 years ago, when he wrote the lyrics to the ditty that's sung throughout the ad: "There's a battle outside and it's raging/ It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls. ... For the times, they are a-changing."

Coopers & Lybrand numbers among its clients the likes of Pacific Telesis, Ford, Digital Equipment, Bechtel and Lucasfilms. The new 60-second spot, which has been shown during the Orange

Bowl and "60 Minutes," shows images of modern America while **Richie Havens** sings Dylan in the background.

National marketing director **Brian Carty** said the song was chosen because "if our clients ask us one thing, it's to help us cope with change."

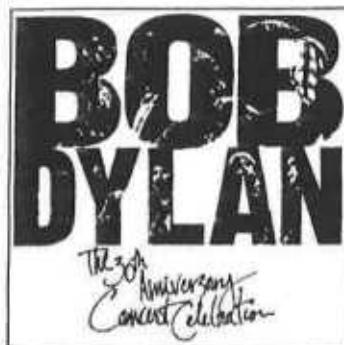


Dylan: The checks, they are a-clearin'

The song is an anthem of change." The change-linked corporate identity was agreed upon two years ago at a strategy meeting in Boca Raton, Fla., and the decision to use Dylan was made six months ago. The company won't reveal how much Dylan was paid for the rights.

The final decision to use the song was made by company chairman **Eugene Friedman**, who, at 61, "wasn't familiar with the song itself," Carty said.

*Knight-Ridder News Service*



★ ★ ★ ★  
**BOB DYLAN: THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY  
CONCERT CELEBRATION**

Various Artists

Columbia



**T**HE BOB DYLAN'S anniversary celebration, held at Madison Square Garden on Oct. 16, 1992, the event transcended the man. Between the stunning range of artists who performed

Dylan's songs — from Stevie Wonder to Roger McGuinn, Tracy Chapman to Eric Clapton, John Mellencamp to the Clancy Brothers — and Sinéad O'Connor's emotional tug of war with the audience, there was no individual hero. Even when Dylan himself took the stage to close the show, he seemed willfully to thwart the natural curve of the evening's climax, subverting the role of fated sage with the mannerisms of a reluctant gunshy lover.

But if no single hero emerged, the songs themselves spoke arrestingly. Perhaps more than anyone else's, Dylan's songs have, immediately upon birth, become the property of everyone; they bear his unique stamp, but they also allow the artists who perform them to be profoundly themselves. The performances on the double-CD *Bob Dylan: The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration* (also available in video form) are an extraordinary tribute to that quality.

Some renditions truly stand out. Lou Reed's explosive "Foot of Pride" expands the moral weight of the original (from *The Bootleg Series*), while Booker T. and the MG's, who served as the core of the evening's house band, make the earth's gravity palpable in every backbeat. In a resonant demonstration of the politics of Dylan's songs and their relevance to younger artists, Mike McCready and Eddie Vedder's "Masters of War" rings with force and dignity. Neil Young's "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" and "All Along the Watchtower" are otherworldly, with fierce guitar excursions as eloquent as Dylan's lyrics. The O'Jays spin "Emotionally Yours" into fervent gospel. And Dylan's own renderings of "Girl From the North Country" and "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)," contrasting innocence and stoic nihilism, dispel any illusion that he lent much credence to the show's ritual of deification. Tellingly, one of the clearest lines in his mumbled "It's Alright, Ma" is "It's easy to see without looking too far/That not much/Is really sacred."

There were a few uneven moments as well. Johnny and June Carter Cash's upbeat version of "It Ain't Me, Babe" is ill-suited to the song, and George Harrison's "Absolutely Sweet Marie" is off-key and uninspired. But overall the album is a remarkable moment of rock history and a fitting testimonial to a body of songs so deeply familiar that melodies, images and even turns of phrase have entered our common language. These songs offer a map of the inexplicable places where politics and personal experience meet, probing and articulating a gamut of feelings that can be found nowhere else. Rock & roll may have become fragmented and diverse, the music of the aging as well as the young. *The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration*, however, reminds us that Dylan's voice informs its very essence. — SUSAN RICHARDSON



# Music Videos



His Bobness, with (from left) His Georgeness, His Tomness and His Neilness.

## Thirtysomething or other

A three-decade anniversary – of what, we're not quite sure. But when the stars come out for Bob, who needs a reason?

### BOB DYLAN: THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT CELEBRATION VOLS I & II

SMV, 194 mins

There are only two things that every rock star will agree on, and they are (i) something must be done about the starving millions and (ii) Bob Dylan is the undisputed guv'nor. Thus this tribute from the guild of senior rockers to its master craftsman, held a year ago before 18,000 fans in New York, and now available in most formats.

Warm-up man is John Cougar Mellencamp, whose Springsteen-lite talent is mystifyingly unleashed on two of the evening's most heavyweight songs, Like A Rolling Stone and Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat, and the crowd is at once rocked into a stomping lather that peaks two hours into the show in the infamous welcome accorded Sinead O'Connor, ball of confusion and public anti-Pope. On she walks to a terrific build-up from Kris Kristofferson; the fans boo, her face falls and she stands distraughtly silent for perhaps the longest two

minutes in showbiz history as the catcalls outnumber the cheers; the band try to strike up but she hushes them with a wave, and, throwing away the script, plunges unaccompanied into the declamatory War, by the wrong Bob, before being rescued by the gallant Kristofferson.

And so, via Eric, George, Ron, Roger, Chrissie, The Band and Uncle Tom Petty and all, the show proceeds with great spirit until that strange moment when the anniversary boy himself takes the stage with an air that wears lightly the weight of both occasion and expectations. It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding) is his personal selection: vocally a high-speed madman's chunter, his born-again guitar rounds out an otherwise gnomic performance. An all-star climax of the Guns N' Roses hit Knockin' On Heaven's Door is fittingly coda'ed by His Bobness alone once more, going back 30 years to what remains perhaps his most tender, heartfelt song, Girl From The North Country. In the end, this is the way we'll remember him best. ★★★★★

Mat Snow



## INDEX TO THE CUTTINGS

25	Top & Right	<i>St. Paul Pioneer Press Express</i>	N/A	27/8/93
	Lower Middle	<i>Rock World</i>	Keith Watterson	??? 93
	Left	<i>Rolling Stone</i>	Fred Goodman	2/9/93
26	Right	From the programme at the Wolftrap	at Filene Centre	8/9/93
	Left	<i>Washington Post</i>	Mike Joyce	9/9/93
27	Top	<i>New York Newsday</i>	Wayne Robins	10/9/93
	Bottom	<i>New York Newsday</i>	Wayne Robins	13/9/93
28	Top	<i>New York Daily News</i>	David Hinckley	13/9/93
	Bottom	<i>Boston Globe</i>	Steve Morse	14/9/93
29	Top	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	Robert Hilburn	4/10/93
	Bottom	<i>Contra Costa Times</i>	Wayne Saroyan	9/10/93
30		<i>San Diego Union Tribune</i>	Karla Peterson	5/10/93
31	Clockwise from top	<i>New York Post</i>	Dan Aquilante	19/11/93
	Under Pic	<i>New York Times</i>	N/A	11/11/93
32	Left	<i>Melody Maker</i>	Sarra Manning	20/11/93
	Middle	<i>Spin</i>	Steve Anderson	January 1994
	Right	<i>Sunday Times</i>	N/A	28/11/93
33	Top	<i>Jewish Chronicle</i>	Don Carnell	26/11/93
	Bottom	<i>The Independent</i>	Andy Gill	11/11/93
34	Clockwise from top left	<i>Folk Roots</i>	Ian Anderson	Jan/Feb 94
		<i>NME</i>	Stephen Dalton	4/12/93
		<i>Vox</i>	Michael Heatley	Dec 93
		<i>The Independent On Sunday</i>	Richard Williams	14/11/93
		<i>The Commercial Appeal (Memphis)</i>	Larry Nager	6/11/93
35		<i>Musician</i>	Bill Flanagan	Dec 93
36	Left	<i>Musician</i>	Bill Flanagan	Dec 93
	Middle (top to bottom)	<i>The Guardian</i>	Caroline Sullivan	12/11/93
		<i>The Observer</i>	Neil Spencer	7/11/93
		<i>Satellite Times</i>	Nik Moore	Jan 94
		<i>Daily Express</i>	N/A	13/11/93
		<i>Aberdeen Press &amp; Journal</i>	N/A	24/11/93
		<i>Rolling Stone Yearbook</i>	N/A	23/12/93-6/1/94
37	Top	<i>Hot Press</i>	Gerry McGovern	Dec 93
	Middle	<i>Q</i>	John Bauldie	Dec 93
	Bottom	<i>Mojo</i>	Robert Wyatt	Dec 93
38		<i>Mojo</i>	Robert Wyatt	Dec 93
39	Clockwise fom top left	<i>The Record Collector</i>	Peter Doggett	Dec 93
		<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	Tony Parsons	23/9/93
		<i>New York Post</i>	Dan Aquilante	17/8/93
40		<i>Unknown US - orig. Washington Post</i>	Andrew Ward	??/??/93
41	Left	<i>Folk Roots</i>	Eric Winter	Oct 93 (?)
	Right	<i>N/K (US)</i>	N/K	??/??/??
42	Top	<i>Accountancy Age</i>		3/12/94
	Bottom	<i>N/K</i>	N/K	??/??/93
43		<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	Bob Cannon	30/7/93
44		<i>Spin</i>	Greil Marcus	Nov 93
45	Top Left	<i>Detroit Free Press</i>		10/1/94
	Right	<i>Rolling Stone</i>	Susan Richardson	16/9/93
46	Top	<i>Q</i>	Mat Snow	Nov 93
	Bottom	<i>The Sunday Post</i>	from Oor Wullie	Xmas 92

## エリア別、おすすめコースでたどる東京の下町界限

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アメ横、佃島、合羽橋、西日暮里

## Close Up

16年ぶりの公演間近!  
ボブ・ディランの魅力久々の来日を果たす  
ディランの魅力を  
5人の日本人アーティストが語る

## Interview

電気GROOVE

ニュー・シングル「N.O.」  
満を持してリリース  
今だから言える秘密とは?

Computer Linking Network

チケット  
ぴあ

03-5237-9999

MORAWA

The following was sent in by Danny West who received it from Pernille Rudlin, - thanks to both of you and particularly Pernille for both sending the Japanese originals and translating the sections transcribed below. The magazine it comes from is called *Pia* and is described as "Tokyo's *Time Out*". The cover is reproduced on the opposite page, it is in anticipation of his February 1994 tour of Japan.

The beginning briefly describes the 30 years celebration of Bob Dylan's debut in Madison Square Gardens in 1962, the main text is as follows.

### IZUMIYA SHIGERU

People are always surprised when I say that I wasn't interested in Bob Dylan in the 1960s and 1970s. At that time Bob Dylan was God to most musicians, especially musicians. I thought he had irritatingly slow delivery, with chronic nasal inflammation. My friends tried to convert me by playing me his records until late into the night, but it didn't work.

Then in 1978 Bob Dylan came to Japan for the first time. I went reluctantly to the Budokan but as soon as he started Heeeeey *Mr Tambourine Maaaaan* I was hooked and was transfixed till the end. It was an amazing vocal technique, which you just can't hear in the records. I was moved. I bought tickets for all the remaining days and was just as moved the other times. It was history being made before my eyes and I was in tears at the end. The only other artists who have moved me as much were Bob Marley & the Wailers. Now I think you can get some understanding of the way Dylan varies each rendition of a song even by listening to the records because if you listen often enough each song turns into a new song every time.

As a latecomer fan my favourite record was *Planet Waves*. I also liked the Band at that time. But I suppose the record I like the best now is *Slow Train Coming*, especially the track *Gotta Serve Somebody* that starts as soon as you drop the needle down. The excitement doesn't change even now it's on CD. He won a Grammy for it and somebody said "finally Dylan gets a Grammy" but I thought "dickhead, he didn't make the record to get a Grammy!" He went somewhere totally different with record, as did his live performances. At the 30 Years celebration, all the other artists were singing his with such enjoyment and only Dylan was singing unknown. {sic} It was like he was the only one that was progressing.

### MIURA JUN

(illustrator essayist, cartoonist, musician and famous Dylan freak)

I collaborated with Sony last year to make a double CD *Dylan Rock*. I put some of my illustrations which I thought most captured the man on the jacket and chose 38 tracks (no ballads) I think young rock fans will really go for it. It's important to get rid of this God of Folk Music old fogey image- Dylan doesn't just play rock, he is rock! That's our campaign.

Unfortunately the CD did not go on general release and is only being circulated in the music business. Which is a pity as I really wanted young people to hear it,

I asked Sony to think of some way of releasing it, and then it turns out Dylan's manager really likes it and wants to release it to commemorate Dylan's Japan tour. It's like a wild dream come true, They've even decided the pressing date. Then a fax comes from Dylan himself - *I'm doing new stuff now, so I don't want this to be released*. Aaagh! My message to Dylan is - I'll be going to every concert from Sendai onwards. And it'll always be my pride and joy that you held my CD in your hand once!

My favourite record: *Bringing It All Back Home*.

### SAMEJILMA SHUKI

from the group Hound Dog, formed 15 years ago. Final stages of national tour at the Budokan Feb. 3rd -5th.

In the 1960s I was listening to the Stones, the Beatles and Led Zeppelin and although Dylan was supposed to be God, he didn't quite do it for me. I always listened for melody and sound, and as words were the important thing with Dylan I found it difficult to get into. The first time I really became conscious of him was with *The Times They Are A-Changing*. He sang it so straight and with *The Times They Are A-Changing*. He sang it so straight and poetically. -I also like *Seven Days*. It was written for Eric Clapton but it was not put on his record. Ron Wood who was in the recording session said "give it to me!" and recorded it for the album *Gimme Some Neck(?)*. Ron Wood told me all about it when he came to Japan recently. Dylan is classified

as Folk, but I think he lives Rock n Roll. For me he taught me that apart from melody, harmony and rhythm music is also about singing about what you believe in and that lyrics are important.

Favourite record: **Bootleg Series I-III** 1991

## NAKAGAWA KIYOSHI

In 1985 started Newest Model, then last year formed Soul Flower Union.

If you had to choose between all the albums then the best period must be the three records released between 1965-1966. You have everything from very personal songs to protest songs, simple songs and complex songs, old and new, daring to push rock right to the boiling point. He laughs at any received ideas of the definition of music and mixes in Soul, Funk and his own style in this collection of music. **Blood On The Tracks** and **Desire** are also good. As for **Infidels**, although I was repelled by the Zionism I was bowled over by the compelling songs. But Dylan's sound cannot be beaten on **Blonde On Blonde**. It really does have a mercurial sound.

The two most recent compositions are important. The deconstruction of Rock, Blues and Country and Country returning to Scotland and Ireland, that's when you can say the USA is getting back to its roots

Favourite record: **Blonde On Blonde**

## NAGAWA GORO - BOB DYLAN IN 1994

1993's **World Gone Wrong** and 1992's **Good As I Been To You** both feature cover versions of traditional Folk and Blues songs, without a single original song. As no new Dylan songs have been forthcoming, there has been malicious gossip that he cannot write any more, but I think they are definitely wrong. For a start, it is just unthinkable that he is unable to write any new songs, and I am sure that there are actually many new songs already in existence.

I think there are more positive reasons why he will not come out with his new songs. He is not singing old folk songs and blues because of a lack of confidence. In **World Gone Wrong** he gives a poetic explanation of his choice of music, in which he says *in order to progress you must sometimes turn the clock back*. He also says that even if the song is old, it may still tell the truth and that the past may still be relevant to today. He feels that there are plenty of songs which express what he has to say without him writing more. The past two records show this vividly.

According to others, this tour will include representative songs from his past as well as the traditional songs, and the contents will change with each concert. On stage, he will show us the future contained in the past and it will not be sentimental nostalgia, but a revelation.

## FROM JAPAN TIMES 15/2/94...PETER SERAFIN: TOKYO TAKES NOTE

Again it is thanks to Pernille Rudlin via Danny West.

In high school the quiet, the serious Robert Zimmerman got good grades, participated in extra-curricular activities and graduated in 1959 with the stated ambition, "to play in Little Richard's band." He'd been studying the roots of rock 'n' roll, folk, blues and country music when he dropped out of the University of Minnesota after a few months and hit the road.

Zimmerman recast himself as Bob Dylan - a runaway with an invented past as a Dust Bowl refugee; and travelled east. His first stop was the New Jersey hospital bedside of his idol, Depression era balladeer, populist and musical activist Woody Guthrie. In the thriving folk music scene that was Greenwich Village in 1961 Bob Dylan began a career which would change the face of not only popular music, but an entire generation.

When Bruce Springsteen, a long time Dylan admirer, inducted him into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame, Springsteen pointed out that Dylan was the one who made the words matter in a rock song - that while the music was primarily a physical experience, the lyrics could make it so much more.

Except for a much speculated-upon hiatus after a motorcycle accident in August 1966, Dylan has toured continually throughout his career. Despite this, he's always held himself aloof from his legion of admirers. He's become something of a cultural-hologram -- an enigma in plain sight.

Last week Dylan and his band returned to the site of the 1978 recording *Live At The Budokan* as part of the 1994 tour. The Budokan has, shall we say charitably, less than pristine acoustics, and in the opening *Jokerman* from the 1983 *Infidel's* album, Tony Garnier's bass overpowered the rest of the music.

Sound levels were corrected by the next tune and Dylan's unique singing, unaccompanied by backup vocalists, shone through. His droning, yet clearly enunciated and mesmerizing phrasing on *All Along The Watchtower* had the rhythm of a Zen priest chanting sutras.

I was struck by the musicality of the event - music wasn't intended merely to accompany the lyrics, rather it served as the central focus of the show. On *Just Like A Woman* he strapped on a harmonica and the band stretched out and took some longish solos. Must have been the influence of Dylan's late '80s work with the Grateful Dead. He also gave us the sly behind the melody phrasing style perfected by Frank Sinatra.

Mid-show everyone got unplugged and treated us to an acoustic set. During this time the words were paramount, set out as though the lyrics were finely wrought objects of folk art carefully displayed on a piece of burlap. The almost-but-not-quite-bluegrass version of *It's All Over Now, Baby Blue* was a beautiful piece of poetry set to music. *Tomorrow Night*, from the *Good As I Been To You* CD, covered the same emotional ground as Carole King's *Will You Love Me Tomorrow*, but Bucky Baxter's pedal steel guitar added a depth and richness to the tune.

In addition to Baxter (who played with Dylan's opening act on the '91 tour), the collection of first rate side men included J.J. Jackson, (guitarist for Nashville's Rhythm Rockers), and drummer Winston Watson (former percussionist for Was Not Was).

The acoustic set finished with a sloppily ended *Don't Think Twice (It's Alright)* and then the band launched into another electric set. When *God Knows* began, it sounded like a chained bulldog straining to break free. J.J. Jackson grabbed a solo and the thing took off - there was no doubt at this point that the sound and the feel of the music, not the words, were in the spotlight. By the encore performances of *Ballad Of A Thin Man* and *It Ain't Me, Babe*, Bob Dylan and his band did what they do best - synergistically unified the words and music.

It's an old adage that only the mediocre are always at their best. Given the unevenness of his work in the last 15 years, Dylan is certainly no exception - his music has ranged from stunning brilliance to embarrassing drivel. *The Bootleg Series - Vol. 1-3* is a 1991 3-CD boxed set documenting the breadth of his genius. It contains unreleased traditional folk tracks, talking blues and a sparkling little diamond called *Blind Willie McTell*. Personally I would have liked to hear that one live. If you want to check out the singer that inspired the song *Blind Willie McTell - The Complete Recordings* will be released by Sony Records this spring.

## BACK TO THE HIGHWAY61 DIGEST [5 MAR 1994]

*For the final word on Japan & the final Bits & Bobs entry*

From: zimmy@access2.digex.net (cc) Subject: Joey Ramone meets Bob Dylan

I just heard on WHFS in Washington D.C. that Joey Ramone was at a Dylan show last week in Japan and that he went backstage afterwards and met Dylan. Apparently they were both excited to meet each other and Joey Ramone gave Dylan an autographed copy of the latest Ramones album which has a cover of *My Back Pages*.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in contributions to **Bits & Bobs** throughout the issues, every bit helped. By the time it got to issue Seven I could've doubled the pages for this section, so apologies if something you sent wasn't included - it all became overwhelming. Also there are a number of **Bits & Bobs** entries in your letters reproduced in the *3rd Subscriber Special Issue* and a few **Odds & Ends** too!





Well, another Dylan album has come and gone as far as the media is concerned and we're still in the same month that it was released. A week or two in the lower reaches of the charts and that's it. Gone. Forgotten. Over here, the reviews were true to form. They usually ran pretty much like this;

- 1) It's **Good As I Been To You** part 2.
- 2) His voice is terrible.
- 3) They're all cover versions, which means he can't write anymore.
- 4) The liner notes are incomprehensible.
- 5) Conclusion: Dylan is a burnt-out, crazy old relic.

A couple of critics found scraps of worth. Ross Fortune in *Time Out* found it a "hugely gratifying thing", though he, too, was ultimately disappointed by the lack of original material. Meanwhile John Bauldie (all kneel) - finally getting his chance to review a Dylan album for *Q* - was decidedly lukewarm, finding his voice nothing more than a "tired monotone". At the time, I considered this to be a fair review. Now I don't. It smacks of the usual "I've heard it once, now I'll review it" attitude favoured by so many walnut-sized-brained journalists. To write it off as nothing more than a follow-up to last year's release would seem to indicate that the themes of death, murder and vengeance are lost on Mr. Bauldie.<sup>1</sup>

Michael Heatley afforded it a couple of paragraphs in *Vox*, finding the harmonica "amusingly hammy" and the whole album *not so much a cloudburst than a shower* then he laments over the absence of the "real" Bob Dylan, despite, probably, the ability to recognize the "real" Bob Dylan if he pissed all over Heatley's lawn.

So it was left to new mag *Mojo* to heap on the praise. Guest reviewer Robert Wyatt - refreshingly free of any ego-trip - turned out a two-page review, though much of it was taken up with his memories and influences of Dylan. *World Gone Wrong is a beautiful record by a beautiful man*, he reveals, *Hear this man do it and take courage*. Which is good advice for all of us.

Many of the other - often minuscule - British reviews all failed to understand Dylan's intentions and all fell into the same predictable pattern.- Comments about his voice (or lack of) and songwriting ability (or lack-of) really do wear thin after a while, and the lasting feeling was of a record given scant - and reluctant - attention by a media too incapable of appreciating anything that doesn't give them an immediate kick.- Small wonder that the general public - mostly anaesthetized by prime-time radio nowadays -gave it a wide berth.

Meanwhile, our American cousins found much to praise, finding many pleasures that the British critics could not or would not. Roger Catlin in the *Hartford Courant* recognized that this was Dylan paying homage to songs that had influenced him and the *N.Y.Daily News's* David Hinckley succinctly summed it up when he talked about *a record about songs, and the mystique of words that travel across the years*. Which is, I'm sure, Dylan's entire intention and is of far more relevance than being told, yet again, that he can't sing.

Ira Robbins in New York *Newsday* compared *Good As I Been To You* on of *an avuncular presence singing around a kitchen table* with *World Gone Wrong's* *quiet, insular intensity where a lonely man pours his gasoline-soaked heart into the emotional fire of these rustic songs*. Even more importantly, he recognizes this album as a reflection of Dylan's state of mind and of the world at large, and, therefore, as important as anything Dylan might write himself. Isn't that more satisfying than reading of Dylan's "hammy" harmonica playing by a twerp of whom the word "hammy" could best be used to describe himself.

Steve Morse, writing for the *Boston Globe*, found this year's model to be far more impressive than in recent years: *the improvement lies in his voice.....and in his emotional commitment*. Finding the album superior to *Good As I Been To You* he has nothing but praise, especially for *Lone Pilgrim which closes this disarmingly sparse but affecting album*.

Though only giving it a casual glance, Chris William's review in the *L.A. Times* managed to say more than most of his British counterparts; *casual fans will be mystified and true ornery Dylanologists will be delighted with more acoustic murder and mayhem borrowed from the bluesy side of the public domain*. Ornery, moi?

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<sup>1</sup>Ed.- Well much as Mr Bauldie seems to object to being discussed in this 'zine, I'd just like to point out that he may have had to make a snap judgement on the album. Remember, Mark, when I first heard and raved about it you were seeing it very much in the same way as the *Q* review, as you admit here. It is probably presumptuous of me to say so, but my guess is Mr. Bauldie had to meet a tight deadline and this influenced his review. Maybe we'll find out one day.



In the *Washington Post* Mike Joyce ties up Dylan's liner notes with the subject matter of the songs; *small wonder World Gone Wrong turns out to be such a bleak and brooding affair....the mood is as grim as can be*. He is among the few critics -to realize that the album - and more importantly, Dylan's own essay - is not only a reflection of a world teetering on the brink but also a lament on how Dylan's beloved folk and rock 'n' roll music had been swallowed up by the huge money-making entertainment machine.

*In many ways he concludes, World Gone Wrong ranks amongst Dylan's most soulful and personal recordings. Amen to that.*

So there we have it, a brief skim over what may be considered to be a critical reaction to Dylan's newie. In reality, though in Britain at least, it's merely an excuse to air the old resentments and for insignificant little shits to massage their egos by knocking rock's . . . finest genius. No, not Meat Loaf, I mean the other genius. I don't want to see John Bauldie saving his eloquent reaction for the next *Telegraph* editorial, He's only preaching to the converted there . His poorly thought out review in *Q* will do everything to convince the average reader (whoever they may be - God, I hope it's not me!) that they were right to drop Dylan after *Street Legal*.

I now consider *World Gone Wrong* to be as impressive as anything since *Oh Mercy* and as powerful as anything since *Slow Train Coming*. It's obvious that Dylan no longer has any place in contemporary society or music which is just as well because this truly is a world gone wrong. Maybe, as (gulp) Chris Rea once said, we really are on road to hell but, as Dylan has proved many people - himself included - have said it earlier and better.



*This second part of the interview took place via fax in January 1994. The only omissions are concerned with the details of sending/receiving via the faxes. I'm not sure I handled the fax medium as smoothly as in the first half but, thanks to Paul's patience and occasional "interruption" I think it all comes out OK.*

AM *Just after Volume One came out you were in the U.K. at a Dylan convention. When you took the stage for a question and answer forum, you received a very warm reception. Despite your other writings on Dylan, I attributed this directly to the approach you'd taken with Performing Artist. Do you agree?*

PW I don't know. I've been to three Dylan conventions in the U.K.; I think they were in November 1988 and May 1990 in Manchester, and then May 1991 in Leicester. The book (Volume One) had just been published at the time of the 1990 gathering, but so very recently that no one had read it yet except John Bauldie, who read it in manuscript (and of course was not at the convention). So you must be referring to Leicester. Yes, a number of people had kind words to say to me about Performing Artist, and I always appreciate that. But each of us reads differently in the same sense that each of us listens differently. The "approach" that I think has made me some friends in the community of Dylan listeners is the fact that I discuss the concerts as well as the albums and songs, and that I am quite convinced that the man is a major artist of our time and place and I'm not afraid to describe enthusiastically a few of the moments of performance that I believe embody his greatness. I think enthusiasm is central to our experience of great art--not the expression of that enthusiasm, necessarily, but the intensity of the private excitement we as listeners experience during the encounter. I guess my approach in the books is that I try to be true to my own experiences as I'm writing about them.

AM *In the introduction and early chapters of the Performing Artist series of books you define your critical approach quite explicitly. Would it be fair to say that the following two quotes constitute the underlying critical approach of these books?*

The best any of us can do is to tell the truth as we see hear and feel it.

and

Throughout Dylan's career we will find that although he has a reputation as a master of words, his mastery is more specifically of performed language--separated from his performance, his words can lose their power and even their meaning.

PW Yes to the first, certainly. There are really no special tricks to essay writing or criticism. You try to be honest about your thoughts, feelings, experiences.

But the second quote is a little misleading. My books are not about the failings of Dylan's words when separated from music and performance. My argument is simply that they can't be separated. Dylan's words are exceptionally good in most cases, and play a vital, primary role in his art. I just ask that we talk about them the way we receive them--as elements of performed songs. It would be intriguing to read an essay that spoke of Van Gogh and Picasso solely in terms of their colors; but it would be distressing if most critics spoke of them as though all they did was create color combinations, or as if the colors could be seen apart from the other elements of their compositions.

I think the underlying critical approach of my two books, not necessarily caught in this quote, is my pursuance of the notion that Dylan sees himself primarily as a performer, and that we can perhaps usefully think of the units of his art as performances rather than as songs (since for our particular culture "songs" and for that matter "poems" are terms that make us think more of composition than of performance).

AM *This (the two quotes above) is what I feel touched a nerve and, to a large extent, I can concur. The thing that touched me was the feeling, when you were talking about playing bootleg tapes, you seemed to be speaking from my own--I guess all of our--experience(s) on hearing these things for the first time. You conveyed the Sense of Wonder....*

*However it'll be a pretty boring interview if I continue like this, and the very success of your approach has led to some things that worry me. For example, recent discussions on the Dylan Computer Digest, Highway 61, on **Ballad of A Thin Man** and **Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands** seemed to end with a lot of people agreeing that the words were just there to create nice sounds and meant nothing.*

PW [Interruption by PW: Half true of **Sad-Eyed Lady** maybe in the sense that the verbal images are abstract and their power is in the way they sound--though that doesn't mean they don't mean anything!--but **Ballad of A Thin Man's** charm and power primarily rests on its lyric content and the specificity of its imagery. Doesn't it?]

AM {continuing previous point} *It reminded me of the passage in your book when you are talking of **I'm Not There** and write:*

What's astonishing here is that we can feel with great intensity and specificity what the singer is talking about, because of the expressiveness of his voice, even though 80% of the lyrics of the song have not been written yet! It's as though we're listening to Dylan in **Visions Of Johanna** sing "Louise, she's all right, she's just near/ She's delicate and seems like the mirror" and we're experiencing all the subtle, conflicting feelings of the situation, communicated through the inflections in the singer's voice, only he's actually singing "Louise, Saturday, under cheer/It's wafflish, she slumps out of fear" and the second word is slurred, it could be "slaughterhouse" or "samurai" for all we know. But the sound of the singing and the sense of the song are so moving and so clear it brings tears to our eyes.

*I can almost feel the readers nodding here, but I strongly believe this has led to an over-reaction. It is true that emphasis on Dylan's lyric writing--almost to the extent of treating it as written poetry--needed to be counterbalanced, as the extract of yours above succinctly does. However, I worry now it has gone far too much the other way. The conclusions drawn on the electronic wall are palpably nonsense, and I think your point too is a specific observation and should not be used as a generalization.*

*I'd counterbalance it with the obviously painstaking craftsmanship of, for example, **John Wesley Harding, Every Grain of Sand** and **Blind Willie McTell**. (Remember, too, **Daniel Lanois's** quotes about how Dylan concentrated harder on lyrics than anyone he'd ever known.)*

PW **I'm Not There** is clearly a very special, very unusual case. Picasso used to play this trick in a more conscious fashion: remove the most obviously necessary element of the work (in this case lyrical content, "meaning") and--abracadabra! the painting still holds together, the song still communicates. This doesn't mean that Dylan's brilliant lyrics are disposable--rather it has to do with the mystery that each part contains the whole, that the perceived object is not as separable into distinct groupings as it seems to be. Slice open the individual cell and you find genetic encoding for the entire human being. Mysterious indeed. Sorry if anyone thought I was saying the words are disposable. Your examples of Dylan's conscious craft are strong ones, assuming you mean JWH the album rather than the song. Dylan worked particularly hard on the compositional craft of the JWH songs, probably in part because he was feeling self-conscious as a performer at the time. (As a public performer--the Basement Tapes performances that keep emerging tell a different story.)

AM *I suppose I am just worried that your approach, which I can go almost all the way with in your own writing, has, due to its success, encouraged a sloppy and dishonest approach to proliferate. (Those who believe the words can just be any old thing, try replacing the lyrics to the above songs with equivalent sounds and try telling me your "versions" would be just as good.) Dylan's words are very important to people and, in many cases, are what draws people to him.*

*I'm much more comfortable with your comment:*

Dylan the songwriter is lucky to have such a versatile performer to work with--and vice versa.

*This seems to maintain a balance that I find lacking in most people I talk to.*

PW Most Dylan fans are unbalanced; we all know that. I don't think we're mostly sloppy or dishonest, though--we just have trouble expressing ourselves, even those of us who write books on the subject. And yet we love to talk and talk anyway. Especially those of us...

AM *Maybe the problem lies in the way "lit crit" has degenerated into academic jargon in many quarters this century, but it will never cease to amaze me how people are so defensively dismissive of analytical criticism (even as they rush to read it), as though a structured approach to explicating why a work of art is so profound and moving should necessarily be limiting--properly done it is the opposite.*



PW Agreed. I think it's just that the analytical approach, when improperly done, is so damned irritating and claustrophobic.

AM *I mentioned in **Homer, the slut #8** that I found Volume Two not quite up to the standard of Volume One--primarily because Volume One had defined your critical approach so clearly that one could anticipate some of your responses. (I'd like to say as an aside that for myself--and I suspect the majority of your readers--it has the benefit of being about tours we were actually at.) This brought an interesting response from you in a letter to **Homer, the slut #9**:*

Basically, I wrote Volume One so I could get to Volume Two.

*Is this completely true or was it a naturally, aggressively protective reply to my comments?*

PW My original desire was to write about the unheard music and particularly the concert tapes. Before I wrote *Dylan--What Happened?* I would tell people that Dylan's body of work in the '70s was just as great as what he'd done in the '60s, but that it took a very different form--most of his newer work was live and available only on audience tapes. (Was this an exaggeration? Maybe. But I'd certainly say without hesitation now that Dylan's live work since 1974 easily equals in significance his recorded work of the '60s, a position that would still be considered alien or foolish by many critics.) I seized on the idea of writing *DWH* partly because it was a hook on which to hang this story I wanted to tell, Bob Dylan since 1970. It was a way of getting people's attention for a discussion of the newer work, since his old fans were all curious about the conversion.

In the same way, the idea of a book about Dylan as a performing artist was largely an outlet for my interest in writing about the hidden side of his oeuvre, and hoping to make the case for its tremendous richness and value. I wanted to write about the tours, and the outtakes, the undiscussed material. After considering various approaches, the only one that really made sense to me was to discuss all of his work, in chronological order. That meant going back and covering the familiar ground in my own way, since my book would be incomplete if I didn't cover the albums and tapes from the '60s. I was a little concerned that it would be very difficult to approach that much-written-about period in a fresh manner. And I really didn't want to get trapped in the Shelton/Spitz effect, where as the years go by the chapters get shorter and shorter and finally it's ten years in a paragraph.

As the book began to get longer than originally planned (which cost me my original publisher, who could have sold a lot of copies of the book for me, but who weren't supportive of my writing it the way I found I had to), I initially resisted the idea of splitting it into two volumes, specifically because I thought that the public would buy the first volume and ignore the second (since it didn't include the "famous" stuff, the nostalgic stuff). And it was the second volume that the project was all about, the second volume that I wanted to get people to read. I wanted and still want more listeners to discover the breadth of Dylan's accomplishment as a performer, and the incredibly rewarding listening experiences offered by the live concert tapes.

AM *Looking to the future now, you have **Crawdaddy!** and, of course, your column in **On The Tracks**. What else is in the pipeline?*

PW I was working on *Bob Dylan, Performing Artist* (1 & 2) from September 1986 to the beginning of 1992, and from 1988 to the end of '92 I was also working on *Rock and Roll: The 100 Best Singles*, which was a more demanding (and satisfying) writing experience than I expected.. So it's been a relief not to have a book-in-progress for the last year or more; instead I've been putting a lot of energy into *Crawdaddy!*, and I tend to start thinking about the essay for the next issue as soon as I've finished the last one. #5 will include Tim Hardin and Counting Crows, among others. (Dylan fans other than Lambchop should find Counting Crows of great interest. I first became intrigued with them when they opened for Dylan in San Francisco and San Jose in May '92.)

My other huge project besides *Crawdaddy!* is a series of 8-10 books I'm editing called *The Complete Short Stories of Theodore Sturgeon*. As you probably know, he was a science fiction writer and, I think one of the greatest writers of this century in the English language. Bringing his work back into print and introducing new readers to his particular genius has been a lifelong ambition of mine, and I'm happy to say **Volume One** will be published in the fall of this year by North Atlantic Books in Berkeley.

And I've been doing some freelancing lately to pay the rent, and also have been germinating an idea for a new book about music that's not about Dylan or rock and roll. I'll tell you more when it's further along...

AM *I'd be curious to know when you are planning **Volume 3** for, and what years it will cover. At the rate Dylan is performing you may have to bring one out called "the slightly later middle years."*

PW Yes. The idea of calling the first book "The Early Years" was not mine--after the first printing of Vol 1 the publisher got a new distributor, and they wanted to eliminate the "Volume 1" concept for fear of discouraging buyers. I think the publisher suggested "The Early Years." And then of course we were trapped into calling Volume 2 "The Middle Years"--at least I couldn't think of an alternative. I suppose Volume 3 could be called The Paripatetic Years or somesuch. But actually, I am not promising a "Volume 3." I would love to write about Dylan's performances since 1986 in the same chronological fashion as the other two books, and I certainly hope to get the chance some day. But I don't know when and don't want to assume ahead of time that it will take the form of a Book Three. I dunno. Certainly I'm not going to be starting on it in the next year, probably longer, and when and if I do start it it's likely to take several years to write.

The main reason I suspect I will eventually undertake such a book is that it's the only way that I can give myself the time and motivation to listen to the tapes as much as I would like to. I've always partly organized my life this way--create writing assignments for myself that require me to listen to or read stuff I love. Those of you who don't need such an excuse may consider yourselves fortunate. But my system works for me.

AM *Perhaps you could give us an insight into the future issue(s) by telling us what you thought of:*

- a) *The Madison Square Garden Tribute show (which I thought was poor)*
- b) *The Clinton Inauguration (since it is pertinent to this issue of **Homer**)*
- c) *The Supper Club shows (which I thought were magnificent, oh those **Queen Jane Approximatelys!**)*

PW MSG Tribute was better than I expected, but my expectations were not high. I enjoyed watching it once or twice. A minor performance, as such agglomerations usually are. I prefer a Dylan concert to a star-studded spectacular, personally.

The Clinton Inauguration I haven't actually seen/heard. Just one song, wasn't it? Not much to discuss, unless you want to get into the "significance" and "implications" of it all, and "was he right or wrong to do it?" The latter question I think is presumptuous and silly. He doesn't belong to us, and he can do whatever he chooses. Nor should too much significance be read into such a choice, in my opinion. He turned down Carter presumably because it didn't feel right--it was an uncomfortable time for him personally and more presidential attention would have put him in an awkward spotlight. This time he was just another American artist acknowledging in a small way his approval of the changing of the guard (to a younger generation of leaders). Not necessarily his approval of a specific person or set of policies. It was altogether a low-key situation. You know that this was not "the" inaugural concert by any means, just one of dozens. "Come by and be part of the festivities." Okay, why not? Dylan isn't always a curmudgeon, but this time I guess there are people criticizing him for *not* being one!

I love the Supper Club shows--on tape; I wasn't there, alas--and have written about them at some length for the third issue of **On the Tracks**. Word is that Dylan was not pleased and is not planning to release the video footage at all. So it goes. I regret this, I think it's wonderful stuff and should be made available to whoever might be interested, but I also respect him following his muse or his whim, however dyspeptic. It's gotten him this far.

[Note: Paul Williams's subscription-only magazine **Crawdaddy!** has a major essay by Paul on **World Gone Wrong** in the 4th issue. This can be ordered for US \$4 (\$5 air); or get a subscription for \$12 for 4 issues (\$16 air) or \$20/8 issues (\$24 air). Order from Crawdaddy, Box 611, Glen Ellen CA 95442 USA. Cheques in pounds ok if you add a little for conversion costs. Also available through Rolling Tomes. Paul's books **Bob Dylan, Performing Artist (Vols 1 & 2)** have just been reissued in the U.K. by Omnibus Press; in the case of Vol 2, The Middle Years, it's the first UK publication.]

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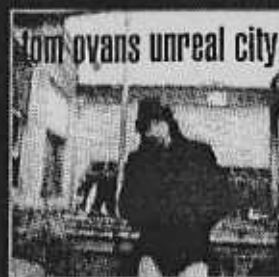
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## A Note On...Blind Willie McTell on record

Actually this aims to be a great deal more than a note: It is intended as the most thorough and complete discography of Blind Willie McTell currently available. All the same, it will be seen that I don't yet have reliable answers to a number of questions. If anyone can answer any of these, I shall be grateful to hear from them, and the sooner the better. (See Section 5, near the end of this article.)

I hope readers won't object that all this is not, strictly speaking, to do with Bob Dylan and therefore shouldn't be taking up space in *Ptolemy, the tart*. In any case, the fact is that it arises out of the work I've been engaged on in updating ***Song & Dance Man: The Art Of Bob Dylan***. This third and final edition, much delayed and on a far larger scale than in the previous editions (1972 and 1981), will now, I trust, be completed and delivered to the British publisher - Abacus, a paperback imprint of Little, Brown & Co. - in March this year, for publication in the autumn. The people at Rolling Tomes keep on listing it but I haven't even finished writing it yet, so I cannot supply them with any of the information they seek, such as the weight of the book (heavy, man). So. Blind Willie McTell:

### 1. THE RECORDINGS

This discography covers the work on which McTell was the primary artist, or shared at least equal billing with other artists. It excludes recordings on which McTell was merely a back-up guitarist for Alphonso Harris, Buddy Moss, Piano Red, Curley Weaver and Ruth Willis.

McTell's own recordings were made in four periods.

The early work, cut in Atlanta, New York City, Chicago and Augusta Georgia for a number of labels, starting with Victor (he was their first Atlanta based blues artist), dates from 1927 to 1936.<sup>1</sup> These recordings are:

**Writin' Paper Blues; Stole Rider Blues; Mama, Tain't Long For Day and Mr McTell Got The Blues** [2 takes] (Atlanta, 18/10/27).

**Three Women Blues; Dark Night Blues; Statesboro' Blues and Loving Talking Blues** (Atlanta, 17/10/28).

**Atlanta Strut; Travelin' Blues; Cigarette Blues and Come On Around To My House Mama** (Atlanta, 30/10/29); **Real Jazz Mama and Kind Mama** (Atlanta, 31/10/29); **Death Room Blues; Drive Away Blues and Hard Working Mama** (Atlanta, 26/11/29); **Blue Sea Blues; South Bound Georgia Blues; Mr McTell's Sorrowful Moan; Weary-Hearted Blues and Love Changing Blues** (Atlanta, 29/11/29).

**Talkin' To Myself and Razor Ball** (Atlanta, 17/4/30).

**Southern Can Is Mine; Broke Down Engine Blues; Stomp Down Rider and Scarey Day Blues** (Atlanta, 23/10/31); **Low Rider's Blues and Georgia Rag** (Atlanta, 31/10/31).

**Rollin' Mama Blues; Lonesome Day Blues; Mama, Let Me Scoop For You and Searching The Desert For The Blues** (Atlanta, 22/2/32).

**Lay Some Flowers On My Grave; Warm It Up To Me; It's Your Time To Worry and It's A Good Little Thing** (NYC, 14/9/33); **Lord Have Mercy If You Please; Don't You See How This World Made A Change; Savannah Mama; Broke Down Engine; Broke Down Engine No. 2** [2 takes] and **My Baby's Gone** (NYC, 18/9/33); **Love-Makin' Mama** [2 takes]; **Let Me Play With Your Yo-Yo; Hard To Get; Death Room Blues** [2 takes]; **Death Cell Blues; Lord, Send Me An Angel** [2 takes] and **Snatch That Thing** (NYC, 19/9/33); **B And O Blues No.2** [2 takes]; **Weary-Hearted Blues; Bell Street Lightnin'; Southern Can Mama; Runnin' Me Crazy and East St. Louis Blues (Fare You Well)** (NYC, 21/9/33).

**Ain't It Grand To Be A Christian; We Got To Meet Death One Day** [2 takes]; **Don't Let Nobody Turn You Around; I Got Religion, I'm So Glad; Dying Gambler; God Don't Like It; Bell Street Blues and Let Me Play With Yo' Yo-Yo** (Chicago 23/4/35); **Lay Some Flowers On My Grave; Death Room Blues; Ticket Agent Blues; Dying Doubter Blues; Cold Winter Day; Your Time To Worry; Cooling Board Blues and**

<sup>1</sup> David Evans' invaluable notes on McTell, published with the LP ***Atlanta Blues 1933*** (see Section 3: The Releases, below) and based on pioneering research work by himself and Bruce Bastin, contain the misleading generalisation that *...beginning with his first session, McTell made commercial recordings at least once every year till 1936*. In fact he didn't make any in 1934.



**Hillbilly Willie's Blues** (Chicago, 25/4/35). **Undertaker's Blues; Mama Keep Steppin'; Maybe Some Day** (yes!) and **Married Life's A Pain** (Augusta Georgia, 1/7/36).

Next comes the 1-day songs-and-talk session taped in an Atlanta hotel-room for the Library of Congress by John A. Lomax on November 5th 1940 (thanks to Lomax's wife Ruby, who by chance heard McTell perform at the Pig'n'Whistle drive-in barbecue the previous evening, and knew a good thing when she heard it). McTell was paid a dollar and his taxi fare for this invaluable session.<sup>2</sup>

The titles given for the songs and interview-answers from this session are as they were assigned by Lomax; this explains the oddness of the title **Monologue On Accidents**, for instance: McTell did not set out to "perform" a "monologue on accidents". Hence too the third-person title **Monologue On Himself**. Likewise a song he performs twice during the session is once given as *I Got To Cross The River Jordan* and once in minstrelised form as *I Got To Cross De River O' Jordan*. The session comprises:

**Just As Well Get Ready, You Got To Die; Climbing High Mountains; Trying To Get Home; Monologue On Accidents; Boll Weevil; Delia; Dying Crapshooter's Blues; Will Fox; I Got To Cross The River Jordan; Monologue On Old Songs; Old Time Religion, Amen; Amazing Grace; Monologue On The History Of The Blues; Monologue On Life As A Maker Of Records; Monologue On Himself; King Edward Blues; Murderer's Home Blues; Kill-It-Kid Rag; Chainey; and I Got To Cross De River O' Jordan** (Atlanta, 5/11/40).

The third period of McTell recordings is that marked by his return to commercial recording in 1949-1950, with sessions for Atlantic and Regal, both recorded in radio-station studios in Atlanta. Only with the reissue of some of the Regal material on a Biograph CD has come the suggestion outside specialist magazines that the Regal session took place not in 1949 but in 1950. This is particularly interesting because it reverses the order in which these two sessions were thought to have been made: that is, it used to be believed that the Regal session had been earlier in 1949 than the Atlantic one. When the short-lived fanzine *Pickin' The Blues* published a Post-War Years discography of McTell and Curley Weaver in issue #10, Edinburgh, 1982, it still believed the Regal session to be dated "August 1949"; yet blues expert Howard Rye, writing a McTell listing in *Collector's Items* #15, 1982, refers in passing to "the 1950 Regal session". Now this 'new information' has been slipped in quietly, in an undeclared revision to the Don Kent notes accompanying a Biograph CD, which are claimed to be the notes to the original LP issue, reproduced. This re-dating results from the re-dating of the Fred Mendelsohn field-trip for Regal during which the McTell session was made. Howard Rye says he extracted this information from French discographer Michel Ruppli's book *The Savoy Label: A Discography*, Westport Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1980.

Assuming that this re-dating is correct, the material recorded in this period comprises, in chronological order, the following (with the Atlantic Session first):

**Broke Down Engine Blues; The Razor Ball [2 takes]; Little Delia [2 takes]; Kill It Kid [2 takes]; The Dying Crapshooter's Blues; Pinetop Boogie Woogie [2 takes]; Blues Around Midnight [2 takes]; On The Cooling Board; Motherless Children Have A Hard Time [2 takes]; I Got To Cross The River Jordan; You Got To Die; Ain't It Grand To Live A Christian; Pearly Gates; Soon This Morning [3 or 4 takes] and Last Dime Blues.** (Atlanta, c. October, 1949). NB. There are, additionally, false starts for **The Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues; Blues Around Midnight; Motherless Children Have A Hard Time; Ain't It Grand To Live A Christian** and **Soon This Morning**; these would not be worth mentioning except that one of them - of **Blues Around Midnight** - runs as long as 58 seconds.

<sup>2</sup>A far more detailed sessionography of all McTell's work in these first two periods resides in the bible of pre-war blues listings, *Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1943* by R.M.W. Dixon & J. Godrich; Chigwell, Essex; Storyville Publications & Co. Ltd., 3rd edition, 1982. This includes, as for every other artist in the book, a listing and dating of every track McTell laid down, including recordings that remained unreleased at the time, naming all accompanying musicians and listing the original 78rpm record label and catalogue number where applicable, plus which pseudonyms were used for each.

However, it doesn't list vinyl reissues, let alone CDs. Nor does it list its material other than by artist: there is, for instance, no song-titles listing; nor, of course, does it go beyond 1943. It was always the intention of blues writer/researchers Mike Leadbitter and Neil Slaven to publish equivalent books for the post-war period. They got as far as *Blues Records 1943-1966*, London, Hanover Books, 1968 but Leadbitter's premature death in 1974 stymied what was to have been an updated 3-volume set of listings of Blues Records, 1943-1970. What emerged instead was a revised version of the manuscript of volume one: i.e. *Blues Records 1943-1970: A Selective Discography, Volume 1: A to K*, Leadbitter & Slaven, London, Record Information Services, 1987. This of course does not cover Blind Willie McTell, nor many another crucial figure from the wrong side of these alphabetical tracks. Neil Slaven hopes to complete and publish *L to Z*, plus a revised Vol. 1, in the future. Meanwhile, based on a skeletal copy of the type-setting of an early-draft Vol 2, Record Information Services is apparently to pre-empt Slaven with a rival version, using discographer Les Fancourt instead.

**Don't Forget (It); A To Z Blues; Good Little Thing; You Can't Get That Stuff No More; Love Changin' Blues; Savannah Mama; Talkin' To You Mama; East St. Louis; Wee Midnight Hours** [though it is Curley Weaver's lead vocal on this track], **Pal Of Mine** [2 takes]; **Honey It Must Be Love; Sending Up My Timber** [2 takes]; **Lord Have Mercy If You Please; Trying To Get Home (Climbing High Mountains); River Jordan; How About You?; It's My Desire** and **Hide Me In Thy Bosom** (Atlanta, 1950).

Last comes the 1-day songs-and-talk session recorded in Edward Rhodes' Atlanta record-shop in 1956. Again, CD-reissue of the material from this session that has been released has brought about a quiet refining of previously-known fact: in this case the recording date for this last session, never more pinned-down than as from "the fall of 1956", has now been fixed at "September 1956". This may have emerged (but if so, it did so somewhat belatedly) from another Michel Ruppli book, the equally massive and expensive **The Prestige Label: A Discography**, Westport Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1980 (an update of Ruppli's **Prestige Jazz Records 1949-1969**, Knudsen, Denmark, 1972).

The session comprises conversation (mostly monologue), which on the LP issued from this material is separately designated on only one occasion (i.e. as **Early Life**) plus songs; however, the full session, in order and as logged, is as follows:

**Warm Up; Baby It Must Be Love; The Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues** [NB. This is logged as **Talkin' about Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues** and **Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues** but clearly the talk is an integral part of the performance in this case: indeed, it's what makes it the best, most riveting of McTell's versions of the song], **Early Life (Talk About Early Life); Pal Of Mine; More About Life; Don't Forget It; Talk About Kill It Kid; Kill It Kid; Talk About That Will Never Happen No More; That Will Never Happen No More; A Request For My Blue Heaven; My Blue Heaven; Some Talk About Drinking; Beedle Um Bum; Talk About Salty Dog; A Married Man's A Fool; Talk About A To Z Blues; A To Z Blues; Talk About New Orleans; Goodbye Blues; Basin Street Blues; Talk About People In Room; Salty Dog; Wabash Cannonball, Talk About St. James Infirmary; St. James Infirmary;(!) Talk; If I Had Wings** and **Instrumental** (Atlanta, September 1956).

Blind Willie McTell died on August 19th, 1959...the very year of the vinyl reissue of his **Statesboro Blues**, which made such an impact on the folk-revivalists - folk-revivalists with whom Bob Dylan, by that point, was already rubbing shoulders in Minneapolis.

## 2: THE LOST RECORDINGS

A number of takes from 1927-1936 were never issued, on wax or vinyl. By the nature of the industry practises of the day, many tracks never issued in the first place tend not to exist at all. Barring the future discovery of previously-unknown test-pressings buried in a wall somewhere (as happened, astonishingly, with some other great artists' Paramount items quite recently), the following McTell recordings have therefore been lost forever (but see the note on the 1994 Columbia Roots 'n Blues Series CD set, below):

**Cigarette Blues** (Atlanta, 30/10/29); **Real Jazz Mama** (Atlanta 31/10/29); **Death Room Blues** and **Hard Workin' Mama** Atlanta 26/11/29); **Blue Sea Blues; South Georgia Bound Blues; Mr. McTell's Sorrowful Moan** and **Weary-Hearted Blues** (all Atlanta 29/11/29); **Lay Some Flowers On My Grave** (NYC, 14/9/33); **Let Me Play With Your Yo-Yo; Hard To Get** and **Snatch That Thing** (NYC, 19/9/33); **Death Room Blues** and **Dying Doubter Blues** (Chicago, 25/4/35).

The four blues sung by McTell backed by Piano Red, made in Augusta Georgia, 1/7/36, were also never issued and almost certainly no longer exist: **Undertaker's Blues; Mama Keep Steppin'; Maybe Some Day** and **Married Life's A Pain**. This means that no McTell recording from 1936 actually exists.

On the other hand, a further scattering of recordings from these early years, which were also unreleased at the time, have been found to exist and have therefore enjoyed their initial release on vinyl. These recordings are specified in the course of the account below.

However, there are almost certainly further lost recordings, this time from the third McTell recording period, i.e. 1949-50. First, 1949 alternative takes of **Kill It Kid; Razor Ball** (originally logged by the record-company as **Raise A Ball!**); **Pinetop Boogie Woogie** and **Soon This Morning**, all from the Atlantic Records sessions, no longer exist. More significantly, two sides apparently recorded for Regal - **River Jordan** (previously recorded at both his Library of Congress 1940 session and his 1949 Atlantic Records session, both times under the full title **I Got To Cross The River Jordan**) and the Thomas A. Dorsey (Georgia Tom) song **How About You?** (not recorded by McTell at any other session) - were reportedly issued as a 78rpm, Regal 3280: but no-one has ever found a copy and no other means whereby the recording might have been preserved, such as on a test-pressing, has been found to exist. What drama! What a prospect!

### 3. THE RELEASES

Vinyl releases, LPs, are the main conduit through which McTell's marvellous work became known to the post-war world. The question of when this work was first accessible to people is important: especially, for our purposes, this question: *When might Bob Dylan first have heard what?* Answers have to be speculative - he knew 78s collectors in both Minnesota and New York - but since the main access to McTell's work was via albums, for Dylan as for most of us, it's valuable to know what the original vinyl issues were, and when they were released.

It is a frustrating obstacle to research that so many of these albums bear no date. Time and again, those who compile these things tell you exactly what Tuesday afternoon in 1933 every track was recorded on but then don't even remember to put on their LP or CD even what year it is being released! You search the record-label, the sleeve and the notes in vain for this basic information. The worst offenders in this respect include all the pre-1969 Biographs (and some later ones), at least the first forty-odd Yazoo releases, and all Roots and all Document/Wolf/RST Blues Documents releases.

At any rate, because of vinyl's importance, I avoid here the fetishistic question of the extant 78rpm wax releases. Unless otherwise stated, from here on "issued" means "issued on vinyl". Second and third generation vinyl reissues are not listed, except where they offer something different or have some historic significance of their own.

CD releases are listed, since they have the obvious virtue of enabling new listeners to acquire McTell's recordings today, and have replaced vinyl as the main way of passing on most old blues recordings. Indeed, the greening of the CD as a new medium has prompted a huge increase in the availability of old music beyond golden-oldie pop. Unfortunately it has also meant the careless slinging together of any old version of any old thing by any old blues singer in many cases. Try to avoid - and persuade your local record-library to avoid too - the cheap and nasty CDs, many of them thrown together in Italy, which come with no information about where or when tracks were recorded. This is often because the recordings are inferior re-makes, in many cases taken from bored performances live in clubland. (There are no such recordings extant by McTell. We'd be grateful if there were!)

Most of McTell's early work was compiled on two Yazoo and one Roots LPs: **Blind Willie McTell: The Early Years (1927-1933)**, Yazoo L-1005, NYC, 1968 (though the first six of this company's releases, among which was this McTell compilation, were on the Belzona label; this was then re-named Yazoo and the LPs swiftly re-issued as such); **Blind Willie McTell (1927-1935)**, Yazoo L-1037, NYC, 1973; **King of the Georgia Blues Singers: Blind Willie McTell (1929-1935)**, Roots RL-324, Vienna, Austria, 1969. The Roots LP includes some 1935 tracks featuring McTell with his wife Kate also singing. She can't sing. (The Roots label, active in the 1960s-70s, has no connection with the Columbia Roots 'n' Blues Series.)

Virtually the same compilation offered by Yazoo L-1037 was also released as **Blind Willie McTell: Death Cell Blues**, on Biograph BLP-C14, NYC, 1973. Likewise, the Roots collection was partly duplicated years later on **Blind Willie McTell (1929-1935)**, Document Records, DLP531, Vienna, 1983/4, though this latter was significant in offering the first-ever issue in any format of a second take of **We Got To Meet Death One Day** (Chicago, 23/4/35).

Some early work lies outside these releases: **Statesboro Blues** (Atlanta, 17/10/28) was issued ahead of all the rest - on the various artists LP **The Country Blues**, RBF Records RF-1, NYC, 1959, issued alongside Sam Charters' pioneering book of that name (**The Country Blues**, NYC, Reinhart, 1959) - before reappearing on Yazoo L-1005. Next, **Dark Night Blues** and **Loving Talking Blues** (Atlanta, 17/10/28) plus **Mama Let Me Scoop For You** (Atlanta, 22/2/32) and **Ain't It Grand To Be A Christian** (Chicago, 23/4/35) were issued on the early compilation **Kings Of The 12-String Guitar**, Piedmont Records 13159, Arlington, Virginia, 1963. A fascinating LP called **Blind Willie Johnson His Story**, Folkways FG3585, NYC, also 1963 (with tracks by Johnson and an interview with his wife Angeline in which she talks of Blind Willie McTell), offered as a bonus McTell's **It's A Good Little Thing** (NYC, 14/9/33: a track that also features Curly Weaver's voice as well as guitar), giving this track vinyl release some ten years ahead of its emergence on Yazoo L-1037. One first session track, the first of two takes of **Mr McTell Got The Blues** (Atlanta, 18/10/27), was issued only on **Travellin' This Lonesome Road: A Victor/Bluebird Anthology**, RCA International RCA INT-1175, London, 1970 (and RCA 731.046 in France). And the good-as-Guthrie talking blues **Travelin' Blues** (Atlanta, 30/10/29) became better known than most in Britain when, a couple of years after its release on Yazoo L-1005, it was included on **The Story Of The Blues**, a double LP (CBS Records [M for mono] 66218, London, 1969) compiled by Paul Oliver and released in association with his book of the same name (**The Story Of The Blues**, London, Barrie and Rockliff The Cresset Press, 1969; later London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1969; paperback published Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1972).

Of his four sides from 1932, all vocal duets with Ruby Glaze (who can sing), only three got released on album before the 1980s. **Mama Let Me Scoop For You** is on the 1963 Piedmont LP and **Rolling' Mama Blues** is on the Roots LP (both detailed above). The other, the beautifully titled **Searchin' The Desert For The Blues**, only appeared on the early compilation **Bluebird Blues**, RCA Vintage Series, LPV-518, NYC, 1965, released simultaneously in the UK as RD7786. (It is possible that this track might have been released first on the oddity **Country Blues And Gospel**, Heritage Records H.302, Australia [?], 1964-5: a 6-track 33rpm EP.) All four of the 1932 recordings subsequently appeared on **Blind Willie McTell: The Remaining Titles (1927-1949)**, Wolf Records WSE 102, Vienna, 1980s. This LP filled gaps left by the original Yazoo releases of McTell's early work.

Two 1933 tracks (**Broke Down Engine**, NYC, 18/9/33 - his first revisit to this song - and **Death Cell Blues**, NYC, 19/9/33) were issued on LP only on **The Atlanta Blues**, RBF Records RF-15, NYC, 1966. Previously unissued tracks from 1933, having been found to exist, appeared on the similarly titled **Atlanta Blues 1933**, JEMF-106, issued by the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, Folklore & Mythology Center, UCLA, Los Angeles, 1979. These tracks, actually made in New York City rather than Atlanta (the LP-title referring to regional style rather than recording location) were as follows: **It's Your Time To Worry** (NYC, 14/9/33); **Broke Down Engine No.2** (NYC, 18/9/33: a second revisit, made the same day as the first); **Love-Makin' Mama**; **Death Room Blues** and **Lord, Send Me An Angel** (all NYC, 19/9/33); **B And O Blues No.2** [2nd take], **Bell Street Lightnin'** and **East St. Louis Blues (Fare You Well)** (all NYC, 21/9/33). This leaves still unissued the alternative takes of **Broke Down Engine No.2**; **Love Makin' Mama**; **Death Room Blues** and **Lord Send Me An Angel**, all of which exist because original producer Art Satherley kept test pressings, which are now stored in a special collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Of McTell's seventeen recordings from two days in late April 1935, those unreleased at the time but subsequently found to exist were issued as follows: **Don't Let Nobody Turn You Around** (Chicago, 23/4/35) and **Cooling Board Blues** (Chicago, 25/4/35) on the Japanese MCA (Blues Tradition Series) album **Blind Boy Fuller /Blind Willie McTell**, MCA 3523, Tokyo, c.1975; **Let Me Play With Yo' Yo-Yo** (Chicago, 23/4/35) was issued both on this Japanese album and on an LP within the German box-set **Blues Box One**, MCA-Coral 6.30106-3, Hamburg, 1975

**I Got Religion, I'm So Glad** (Chicago, 23/4/35) was first issued on another Japanese LP, **Gospel Music Vol. 1 (1926-1940)**, MCA 3530, Tokyo, 1976.

As already stated, the second take of **We Got To Meet Death One Day** (the first is on the Roots LP) was released in the 1980s on Document DLP531.

A general selection (twelve tracks) of these 1935 recordings - not aiming to highlight rarities - was released on **Blues In The Dark**, MCA Records Jazz Heritage Series MCA 1368, Universal City, California, 1983. When released, this was the first time that a whole LP of McTell's pre-war work had ever been issued on vinyl by a record-company that had itself issued the relevant 78rpm's in the first place. (These had been on Decca; MCA owned Decca and thus its McTell masters.) The earlier vinyl releases on Yazoo and Roots had in effect been bootlegs, the material taken from 78s whose copyright ownership lay elsewhere - albeit mostly with corporations who had never even heard of Blind Willie McTell, let alone contemplated reissuing his material.

Of all the vinyl listed above, the following have been issued on CD: Yazoo L-1005 as Yazoo CD-1005, NYC 1990; Yazoo L-1037 (now subtitled **Doing That Atlanta Strut**) as Yazoo CD-1037, NYC 1991; and the Wolf Records album as **Blind Willie McTell 1927-1949**, Wolf Collectors Series Special Edition WSE-102CD, Vienna, date unknown. The 1969 Paul Oliver compilation has also been CD-reissued: **The Story Of The Blues 2-CD** set, Columbia 468992-2, NYC, 1991.

However, all McTell's extant early-period work (1927-1935), re-compiled into chronological order and including all the extant rare tracks except the four outtakes deposited at JEMF (as detailed above), is now available as follows:

**Blind Willie McTell Vol. 1, 1927-1931**. Document Records DOCD-5006, Vienna, 1990; **Blind Willie McTell Vol. 2, 1931-1933**. Document Records DOCD-5007, Vienna, 1990; and **Blind Willie McTell Vol. 3, 1933-1935**. Document Records DOCD-5008, Vienna, 1990. I should mention that it is recurrently alleged that Yazoo offers better sound quality than Document/Wolf. I wouldn't rush to say so myself.

Announced last year for release in January 1994 but now put back until at least April is a Blind Willie McTell set in the Columbia Roots 'n Blues Series, NYC. This was trailed under the title **The Complete Blind Willie McTell**; since no such thing could possibly be squeezed onto two CDs (the maximum size of any normal issue in this series), the full title will presumably prove to be **The Complete Columbia Blind Willie McTell** and will collate all the extant sides recorded by McTell for that company and its sister-label OKeh in Atlanta in

October 1929, April 1930 and October 1931, plus the Vocalion sides (including the four still-unreleased outtakes) from the four sessions done in September 1933. There is hope, therefore, that some of the sides in the list of Lost Recordings given above may turn up after all - especially since the Roots 'n Blues Series has proved so very keen on digging out previously-unreleased material. (For instance **Big Bill Broonzy: Good Time Tonight**, Columbia Roots 'n Blues 467247-10, NYC, 1990, offers 7 previously-unreleased sides and 7 previously-unreleased alternate takes out of a total of 20 tracks!)

NB. In fact three McTell tracks (none of them rarities) have already appeared on Roots 'n Blues issues. **Southern Can Is Mine** (Atlanta, 23/10/31) is one of the tracks on the **Beauty Of The Blues** sampler CD, Columbia Roots 'n Blues 468768-2, NYC, 1991; the same track is also on the compilation **Legends Of The Blues Vol. One**, 467245-2, NYC, 1991; **Georgia Rag** (Atlanta, 31/10/31) and **Warm It Up To Me** (NYC, 14/9/33) are on the compilation **Great Blues Guitarists String Dazzlers**, Columbia Roots 'n Blues 467894-4, NYC, 1991.

The 1940 Library of Congress recording was first trailered by the release of an excerpt from McTell's performance of **Boll Weevil** on a Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song album **The Ballad Hunter Part V and VI**, AFS L51, Washington DC, c.mid-1950s: one of a series of five LPs (ALS L49-53) comprising audio-illustrated talks by John A. Lomax which had first appeared as radio broadcasts as early as 1941. The LP series title alludes to a book by Lomax: "Adventures of a Ballad Hunter", NYC, Macmillan, 1947. The side of the LP on which McTell's **Boll Weevil** is excerpted is a talk on the song itself, with extracts from other versions by people from Guthrie to Leadbelly. The whole recording of the McTell 1940 "session" (nineteen "tracks") was then issued on **Blind Willie McTell: 1940**, Melodeon MLP-7323, Washington DC., 1966 (and on Storyville 670.186 and SLP186 in Europe [Storyville Records is Danish-based, and nothing to do with Storyville Publications]). I've heard it rumoured that this is now CD-issued by Biograph (Melodeon became a subsidiary of Biograph in 1972 or 1973) but I can't find anyone who has actually seen it. It certainly is on release as "Blind Willie McTell Complete Library of Congress Recordings In Chronological Order (1940)" on RST Blues Documents BDCD-6001, Vienna, 1990. (RST is, as you'll have guessed, a division of Document Records. Wolf Records, however, is no longer associated with Document Records or Document's owner, Johnny Parth - the man who has set himself the extraordinary task of issuing every pre-war blues recording still in existence. He is no slouch at it, either: in the period 1982-92 he was responsible for compiling and/or issuing, not all on his own labels, 566 albums; and from August 1990 to December 1992, a total of 188 CDs.)

The 1949 session for Atlantic remained unreleased except for two tracks put out on a 78rpm issued in January 1950, which comprised **Kill It Kid** c/w **Broke Down Engine Blues** as by Barrelhouse Sammy (Atlantic 891). Later, these two tracks were, perhaps unsurprisingly, the first to appear on vinyl. They were issued on **Country Blues Classics - Vol. 3**, Blues Classics BC-7, Berkeley, 1966. The whole of the extant session (except for four alternate takes: ie. one take each of **Little Delia: Blues Around Midnight** [and that 58 second "false start"], **Motherless Children Have A Hard Time** and **Soon This Morning** still lurking unissued) was first issued on vinyl (thanks to collectors like Leadbitter, Pete Lowry and Simon Napier) as **Blind Willie McTell: Atlanta Twelve String**, Atlantic Records SD 7224, NYC, 1972. This has been issued on CD with the same title as the album-version, on Atlantic 7 82366-2, 1992.

The eighteen still-extant 1950 Regal sides were all issued, but they were distributed between one Savoy and two Biograph LPs, none of which offered the complete session: **Living With The Blues**, Savoy MG 16000, Newark, New Jersey, c.1960, was an early LP-selection of Savoy's post-war country-blues material (Savoy owned Regal by this point) and it includes just one of the McTell Regal sides, **A To Z Blues**. This LP was issued considerably later in the UK by the endearing little Oriole company on their Realm label: **Living With The Blues** Realm Jazz Savoy Series RM209, London, 1964.

The first of the Biographs was **Blind Willie McTell 1949: Trying To Get Home**, Biograph BLP-12008, Brooklyn New York, 1969. This offers eleven sides: **Hide Me In Thy Bosom**; **Honey It Must Be Love**; **Sending Up My Timber** [2 takes], **Lord Have Mercy If You Please**; **It's My Desire**; **Trying To Get Home**; **Don't Forget It**; **Good Little Thing**; **You Can't Get That Stuff No More** and **Pal Of Mine** [take no. 2]. When this album was first issued, a sleeve-note claimed that it represented the complete output of McTell's Regal session; this was plainly untrue. Its selection, augmented by more of his Regal tracks, has been CD-issued as **Blind Willie McTell: Pig 'n' Whistle Red**, Biograph BCD126, USA, 1993.

The other Biograph LP combines some McTell sides with some by Memphis Minnie from the same year: **Blind Willie McTell - Memphis Minnie 1949: Love Changin' Blues**, Biograph BLP-12035, Canaan New York, 1971. The McTell sides on this album are: **Love Changin' Blues**; **Savannah Mama**; **Talkin' To You Mama**; **East St. Louis**; **Wee Midnight Hours** and **Pal Of Mine** [take no. 1]. There has been no CD-reissue of this LP: its material has been divided up and re-compiled. The Memphis Minnie tracks have been CD-issued on a compilation putting her Regal material alongside tracks by Jimmy Rogers, St. Louis Jimmy, Sunnyland Slim, L.B. Montgomery and Pee Wee Hughes; the Blind Willie McTell tracks have been put



alongside material by Skip James and Bukka White on the curiously titled *Three Shades Of Blues*, Biograph BCD107, NYC?, 1992.

All eighteen still-extant Regal sides have now been CD-issued on *Blind Willie McTell & Curley Weaver: The Post-War Years 1949-1950* on RST Blue Documents BDCD-6014, Vienna, 1991.

The 1956 "Session" has never been issued in full (though when the majority of the session was issued, it was never made clear that this was not the full session). *Blind Willie McTell: Last Session*, originally issued on Prestige Bluesville 1040, Bergenfield, New Jersey, as early as the autumn of 1961, and reissued on Prestige PR 7809, Bergenfield, New Jersey, 1966 (and in the UK for the first time then as *Blind Willie McTell: Last Session*, Transatlantic Records, PR1040, London, 1966) has also been CD-reissued, in the USA (and as a cheap import in the UK), on Prestige Bluesville Original Blues Classics OBCCD-517-2 (BV-1040), Berkeley, California, 1992. (Prestige was owned by jazz buff Bob Weinstock; Bluesville was therefore the series name for its blues releases; Original Blues Classics is a series-name within the series-name, as it were. The whole of Prestige is now owned by Fantasy Records.)



This CD has been digitally remastered, and is astonishingly "clean" and crackle-free - which is especially useful when it comes to hearing McTell talking - and yet, and yet, the clean-up process does take a slight edge, or bite, away from the singing voice. This CD-reissue is padded out with a couple of "bonus tracks" (as if it were an Elvis movie-soundtrack album), which prove to be the two Atlantic 1949 tracks that had been issued as a 78rpm single in January 1950.

NB. Any of these may also get secondary release on other companies' cheap CDs, just as the Robert Johnson material has been issued on Charly Blues Masterworks (a rather nasty series) as well as on Columbia. Such duplications usually offer inferior sound quality and very

inferior documentation. In McTell's case, the Bob Dylan Effect can be detected in the emergence of two such sets on the previously-unknown American-based Blue Planet label (UK distribution by Greyhound), which has just CD-issued the Library of Congress Session and the Last Session as *Nobody Sings The Blues Like Blind Willie McTell Volume 1* BPCD1002, USA, 1993 and *Volume 2* BPCD1003, USA, 1993 respectively. I've not seen nor heard these so I can't comment on their quality. They retail at just under £10 each.

Meanwhile, enticingly, the following titles from Blind Willie McTell's last session have never been released (but definitely do exist!): the *Warm Up*; *More About Life*; the *Request For My Blue Heaven* (though this may not include McTell's voice); *My Blue Heaven*; *Some Talk About Drinking*; *Talk About Salty Dog*; *Talk About New Orleans*; *Basin Street Blues*; *Talk About St. James Infirmary*; *St. James' Infirmary*; *Talk*; *If I Had Wings* and *Instrumental*. (This information was first revealed in the article *Blind Willie McTell - A Last Session* by Samuel B. Charters published in *Record Research Magazine* #37, Brooklyn NY, August 1961 and was re-stated in Leadbitter & Slaven's *Blues Records 1943-1966*. However, since the record-sleeve has never mentioned the incompleteness of its contents, this has been generally forgotten, though the existence of an unissued part of the session was hinted at subsequently by David Evans in his JEMF-106 notes: these mentioned *St. James Infirmary* and *Basin Street Blues* as part of McTell's last-session repertoire, and in re-telling the story of the unearthing of the session, says that Charters "arranged to have most of it issued" [my emphasis]). NB. *Don't Forget It* as issued is an edited-down version of the full recording.

## 4. EARLY VINYL RELEASES IN SEQUENCE

Pulling out from all this information a history of when which McTell tracks first emerged on vinyl, therefore, we find a most interesting sequence. If you had no access to 78rpm's, but were listening out vigilantly for Blind Willie McTell on vinyl, you could first have come across his work in this order:

- 1: Mid-50s: excerpt from **Boll Weevil**, cut 1940.
- 2: 1959: **Statesboro Blues**, cut 1928.
- 3: c.1960: **A To Z Blues**, cut 1950.
- 4: 1961: **Blind Willie McTell: Last Session**, cut 1956.
- 5: 1963: **Dark Night Blues** and **Loving Talking Blues**, cut 1928.  
**Mama Let Me Scoop For You**, cut 1932.  
**Ain't It Grand To Be A Christian**, cut 1935.  
**It's A Good Little Thing**, cut 1933.
- 6: c.1964: **Searching The Desert For The Blues**, cut 1932.
- 7: 1966: **Blind Willie McTell: 1940**, cut 1940.  
**Broke Down Engine** and **Death Cell Blues**, cut 1933.  
**Broke Down Engine Blues** and **Kill It Kid**, cut 1949.
- 8: 1968: **Blind Willie McTell: The Early Years**, cut 1927-1933.
- 9: 1969: **Blind Willie McTell 1949: Trying To Get Home**, cut 1950.  
**King of the Georgia Blues Singers**, cut 1929-1935.
- 10: 1970: **Mr. McTell Got The Blues**, cut 1927.
- 11: 1971: **Love Changin' Blues**, **Savannah Mama**, **Talkin' To You Mama**,  
**East St. Louis**, **Wee Midnight Hours** and **Pal Of Mine**, cut 1950.
- 12: 1972: **Blind Willie McTell: Atlanta Twelve String**, cut 1949.
- 13: 1973: **Blind Willie McTell 1927-1935**, cut 1927-1935. **Blind Willie McTell: Death Cell Blues**, cut 1927-1935.
- 14: 1975: **Let Me Play With Yo' Yo-Yo**, cut 1935.
- 15: c.1975: **Don't Let Nobody Turn You Around**; cut 1935. **Cooling Board Blues**, cut 1935.
- 16: 1976: **I Got Religion, I'm So Glad**, cut 1935.

NB. It has not been possible to ascertain which of the LPs from 1963 came out first, so that the sequence above is not necessarily exact within the year; likewise for other years in which there was more than one release.

Oddities of this history of McTell's vinyl releases include the fact that the first whole album of his work to appear was taken from his last-ever recording session, and that 1933 and 1949 versions of 'Broke Down Engine [Blues]' were issued before the consummate, classic first version from 1931.

## 5. QUESTIONS:

Aside from the questions indicated in the text above, a series of further queries arose from working on this material. Can anyone offer reliable, checked information in answer to any of the following:

(1): Was any of the early work (1927-1935) issued on wax but never on vinyl, as seems to have been the case with the two post-war Regal sides mentioned in Section 2: The Lost Recordings, above?

(2): Specifically, how is it that the Vocalion unissued **Lay Some Flowers On My Grave** from 14/9/33 doesn't exist but **It's Your Time To Worry** from the same session does?

(3): Likewise why don't **Let Me Play With Your Yo-Yo**; **Hard To Get** and **Snatch That Thing** from 19/9/33 exist when other originally-unissued stuff was available for the JEMF LP?

(4): Re the Atlantic Records 1949 session's four alternate takes: why wasn't Atlantic's issue of a CD of the session taken as the opportunity to include these four extra tracks? Is there any reason not to issue them?

(5) Likewise, why wasn't the CD-issuing of the **Last Session** seized as the opportunity to add in the previously-unreleased part of the sessions?

(6) Was any McTell material issued on the forgotten EP format ahead of its LP emergence (as it has been

suggested might have been the case with the 1932 track **Searching The Desert For The Blues**)? This was certainly the case with some artists: for example, tracks by Charley Patton were vinyl-issued on an EP on the English (as against the Australian) Heritage label before there was ever an LP of Patton material.

## 6. THE STOCKISTS

The best stock of blues CDs in retail premises in England seems to be the Blues Department of Tower Records in Piccadilly Circus (071 439 3500), presided over by the enthusiastic Adam Seiff (recently promoted and now responsible for other departments too) and Rod Henderson, and including a dizzying display of the hundreds of releases already available on Document. (The UK distributor for Document is Dave Foster at Hotshot Records/House Of The Blues, Leeds: 0532 742106, but this is a wholesaler, not a retailer.) There's also a big mail-order blues stock (and regularly updated list) from Red Lick Records, PO Box 3, Portmadog, Gwynedd LL48 6AQ (Tel: 0766 770990), run by Bob Dylan fan Ken Smith. Ray's Jazz Shop at 108 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8JS (071 240 3969) sometimes has second-hand blues vinyl bargains/rarities; their Mr. Glass knows about the blues. If anyone knows of other specialists or keen sources for new and/or second-hand blues records, I'd be grateful for the details.

## 7. THANKS

For help on the above, grateful thanks to Wolfram Altenhovel, Alan Balfour, John Cowley, Dave Foster at Hotshot Records/House Of The Blues, Joe Donnelly, Jackie Giff, Jorg Hausman, Jim Heppell, Duncan Hume, Peter Narvaez, Johnny Parth, Howard Rye, Philip Saville, Marie Scott, Neil Slaven, Chris Smith, Ken Smith, Ray Templeton, Paul Wilson at the National Sound Archive, and especially to Tony Russell. Finally I'd like to take the opportunity afforded by this last **A Note On...** to thank and congratulate Andy Muir for building up what became a very fine fanzine, and to congratulate him for having the courage to give it up when he felt the moment had come.

## STOP PRESS 19/3/94:

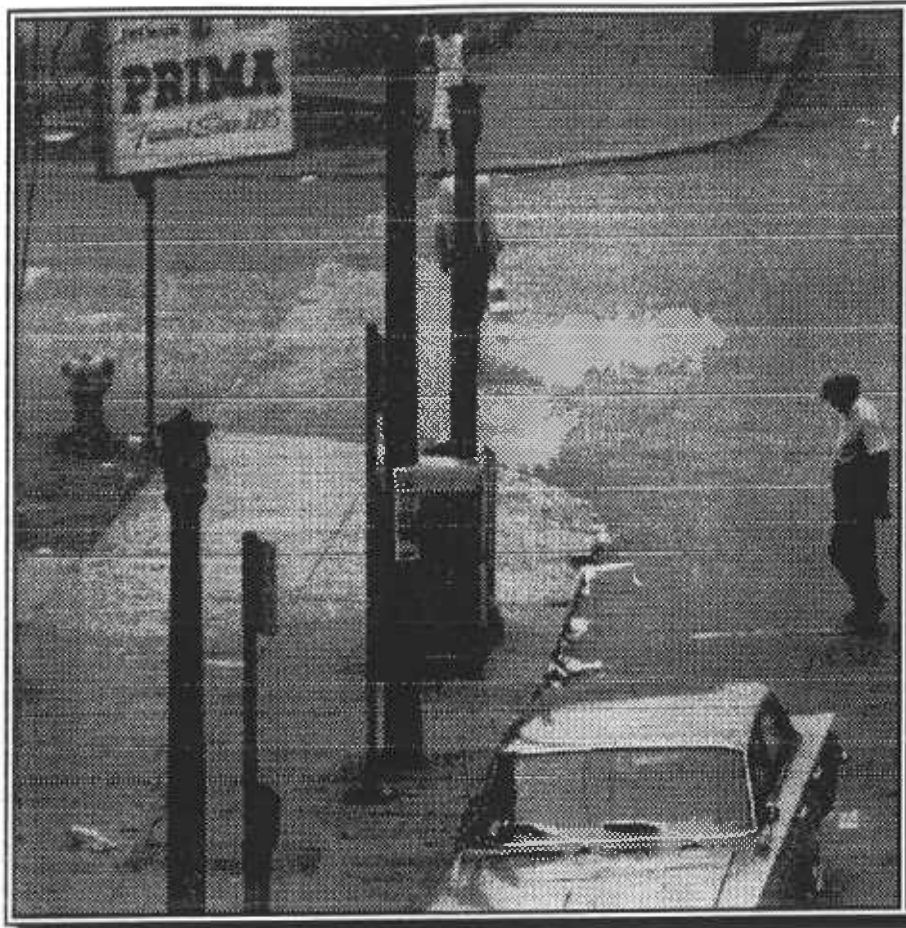
I've now had advance details on the 2-CD Columbia Roots 'n' Blues Series McTell set, in a series of faxes from Laurence Cohn at Columbia in Santa Monica, whom I thank for his patience and prompt co-operation. The news is that there will be 41 tracks on the set, which is due out around the end of April on import, catalogue no. 53234, but that there are no exciting surprises here. None of the pre-war Lost Recordings has been found to exist, and of the four previously unissued takes, it looks as if only three are to be issued now, though possibly the fourth may be there too.

The question mark here arises because it isn't clear from the info received whether the set omits the previously released 1933 **Broke Down Engine** or the previously unreleased take of **Broke Down Engine No.2**: it ought to include the 1933 **Broke Down Engine** plus both takes of **Broke Down Engine No.2** (the previously released one and the unreleased one) but it seems to miss out one of these three items and it is not clear to me which has been left off.

Aside from this, the set offers every extant McTell track recorded for Columbia, Okeh and Vocalion/ARC, starting from his debut Columbia session in 1929 and finishing with tracks from September 1933.

These are: **Atlanta Strut**, **Travelin' Blues** and **Come On Around To My House Mama**, (Atlanta, 30/10/29); **Kind Mama**, (Atlanta, 31/10/29); **Talking [sic] To Myself** and **Razor Ball** (Atlanta, 17/4/30); **Southern Can Is Mine**, **Broke Down Engine Blues**, **Stomp Down Rider** and **Scarey Day Blues** (Atlanta, 23/10/31); **Low Rider's Blues** and **Georgia Rag** (Atlanta, 31/10/31); **Warm It Up To Me**, **It's Your Time To Worry** and **It's A Good Little Thing** (NYC, 14/9/33); **Lord Have Mercy If You Please**, **Don't You See How This World Made A Change**, **Savannah Mama**, **My Baby's Gone** and two out of the following three, as explained above: **Broke Down Engine**, **Broke Down Engine No. 2** [2 takes] (NYC, 18/9/33); **Love-Makin' Mama** [2 takes], **Death Room Blues** [2 takes], **Death Cell Blues** and **Lord, Send Me An Angel** [2 takes] (NYC, 19/9/33); **B And O Blues No.2** [2 takes], **Weary Hearted Blues**, **Bell St. [sic] Lightnin'**, **Southern Can Mama**, **Runnin' Me Crazy** and **East St. Louis Blues (Fare You Well)** (NYC, 21/9/33).

Augmenting this collection is a small number of further tracks on which McTell is not the main artist. I stated right at the start of this discography that its aim was to cover "the work on which McTell was the primary artist, or shared at least equal billing with other artists. It excludes recordings on which McTell was merely a back-up guitarist for Alphoncy Harris, Buddy Moss, Piano Red, Curley Weaver and Ruth Willis." But in fact in the case of the last two artists on this list, a few tracks were made on which you can just about argue, at a push, that McTell does get equal billing - and Columbia have chosen to include some of these, as follows:



**Rough Alley Blues**, originally billed as by "Mary Willis, vocal, accompanied by Blind Willie McTell, vocal and guitar" (Atlanta, 23/10/31);

**Experience Blues** and **Painful Blues**, as by "Ruth Day" [same woman], with McTell down as "Guitar Sammie" in Columbia's original files (Atlanta, 23/10/31);

**Low Down Blues**, as by "Mary Willis, vocal, accompanied by Blind Willie McTell, guitar, and Curley Weaver, 2nd guitar" (Atlanta, 31/10/31). This is surely a track on which McTell is merely a back-up musician: and though they're including this, they are not including the other track from the same session, **Merciful Blues**, which had the same line-up, because, despite the two having been issued as a 78rpm, they have been unable to find a copy to take it from.

**You Was Born To Die**, as by "Curley Weaver & Partner" and **Dirty Mistreater**, ditto (NYC, 18/9/33). On the first of these the "Partner" is indeed McTell: he sings on the choruses and plays guitar throughout; on the latter, though, the "Partner" is Buddy Moss, who plays the second guitar. McTell's contribution is off-mike comments barely audible during the hummed third verse. (Both of these were tracks that were LP-issued on the JEMF-106 album, 1979, already mentioned.)

So, to sum up, the Columbia 2-CD set DOES finally make available the previously unreleased alternate takes of **Love Makin' Mama**, **Death Room Blues** and **Lord Send Me An Angel**, all of which exist because original producer Art Satherley kept test-pressings, but MAY leave still unissued the alternate take of **Broke Down Engine No.2**.

However, all McTell's extant early-period work (1927-1935) except the four outtakes deposited at JEMF (as detailed above), is already available as noted earlier on the Document Records CDs DOCD-5006 to DOCD-5008.

No doubt if you've got these three Document CDs, you'll find the Roots 'n' Blues duplications give you far better sound quality (they will have been Cedarised), but you will get only three (possibly four) extra alternate versions, two (possibly three) of which are supposedly almost identical to the ones already issued. And if you already own, too, other Roots 'n' Blues issues, you'll now get further duplication, as detailed earlier.

On the other hand, with a booklet by David Evans, whose writing accompanying the JEMF-106 LP offered by far the most thorough and detailed information ever published on McTell, there's no doubt that the Columbia Roots 'n' Blues set will be a joy to have, and is likely to be one of the best selling issues in the series.

This in turn will have the effect of raising the public profile of Blind Willie McTell, making more accessible one of the very greatest artists in the whole of the rich, prolific blues world. Perhaps his name will become as well known as Robert Johnson's. In engineering such a deserved elevation of the reputation of Blind Willie McTell, the work of Bob Dylan will have played a small, honourable part.

Michael Gray (Thornton-le-Dale, North Yorkshire, c.Feb-Mar 1994).

Accentuate the Negative(Looking for Answers with a Mathematical Singer)

"i am convinced that all souls have some superior t' deal with"

Liner notes to *Bringing It All Back Home*

March 1965

"God is a woman.... you take it from there"

Austin, Texas Press Conference

September 1965

T.S. Eliot knew what he was talking about, and he sure told the truth. Faced with the frighteningly depressing and ridiculously senseless prospect of human kind taking up arms against itself, Eliot turned to the only thing, apart from his faith, that he knew would keep him alive, i.e. his poetry.

Many lowly servants of the people were becoming mighty Masters of War as Eliot took up his pen to write the poem *East Coker* in 1940. In this poem, Eliot's first for five years, he seemed to be not only expressing a belief in historical continuity at a time when it was seriously threatened, but he also confessed to the situation that, in endeavouring to compose the perfect verse, he was placing himself in the line of a long standing literary tradition. He was perhaps acknowledging that it was only because his literary forbears, the likes of Blake and Yeats, were brave enough to blow away the clouds of reason that he was able to take his position in the sunshine and write his poems to the world. Standing naked in the stark brightness of the achievements of his predecessors, Eliot wrote, in *East Coker*:

*So here I am, in the middle way, having had 20 years -*

*Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt  
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure*

*Because one has only learnt to get the better of words*

*For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which*

*One is no longer disposed to say it. And so each venture*

*Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate  
With shabby equipment always deteriorating  
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,  
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to conquer*

*By strength and submission, has already been discovered*

*Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope*

*To emulate - but there is no competition -*

*There is only the fight to recover what has been lost*

*And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions*

*That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.*

*For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business*

Now I'm no T.S. Eliot but when it comes to writing about Dylan's work I think I can sense the trepidation expressed by the great poet in those lines quoted above. There has already been so much discovered about particular Dylan songs by professors, scholars, Reverend Doctors, Published Authors and by other men of letters whom I cannot possibly hope to emulate.

Take the classic 1965 Dylan song *Love Minus Zero/No Limit* for instance. The May 1992 (# 6) edition of *Homer the Slut* focused on this song and presented about twenty different views/interpretations from an entire catamaran of renowned Dylan writers, each item jostling for a place in the boat of illumination. Reading again the quoted extracts from the views of Scaduto, Bowden, Shelton, Day, Williams, Herdman, Scobie, Rinzler, Mellers, Ricks, Gray etc, there appears to be a common thread of ideas concerning this song, i.e. that it is a beautiful love song and its theme centres on an idealised vision of love or concerns the love for an ideal woman, thus bringing to the fore all the positive qualities and aspects of a love relationship between Dylan and a "Zen-like" woman. (Williams actually names the woman as Sara, Dylan's hastily married and thereafter permanently despatched ex-wife).

There is of course no danger in repetition and my life would be made oh so simple if I could just go along with all these views and welcome aboard their ship of ideas. But I can't, for when it comes to writing about Dylan's songs, I always seem to walk a gangplank - behind me are those eminent writers with the accepted view, prodding me to dare to say something different; and in front of me is an entire sea of faces, any one of whom might happen to read this and either dismiss me or embrace me. The only support that I have with me as I tread



further along the gangplank are those words from T.S. Eliot:

*For us, there is only the trying.  
The rest is not our business.*

So I'll try to explain my view of this song.

My first problem with **Love Minus Zero/No Limit** is the suggestion that it is a positive love song. When Dylan performed this song in concert in 1965 he confessed to his appreciative audience that: "I made the title before I made the song". In pursuit of my exposition of this song therefore, I shall start where Dylan himself did: with the title. But first, a skip forward to 1966.

Dylan was still performing the song **Love Minus Zero/No Limit** every night in his concerts in the early part of 1966 and when he was asked, a couple of months later, by an enquiring journalist at a Press Conference in Sweden about the sort of songs he sings Dylan replied:

*I sing ordinary mathematical songs.*

*What does that mean?* the journalist floundered.

*Mathematics? Its things like adding, subtracting, dividing, multiplying...*

Well, if any of Dylan's songs are "mathematical songs" surely **Love Minus Zero/No Limit** - or, at the least, its title - would be a prime contender for some mathematical analysis. And this is where my problems start because, on a mathematical level, my eyes go straight to the word minus in the title of the song.

You see, I always thought that, in mathematics, the word "minus" indicates a negative quantity whereas of course "plus" indicates a positive quantity. If you go along with that then you would no doubt agree with the proposition that minus = negative; plus = positive. If you also take the word "love" as implying some kind of abstract impulse then "love" linked to "minus" must mean a negative impulse. Following through with this, a negative impulse is something which gives nothing; and the word nothing is exactly the meaning of the next word in the title, i.e. "zero".

Continuing with this theme of positive over negative, the next word in the title is "no". Correct me if I am wrong but, on a simple interpretative basis, an answer to a question in the affirmative or positive is yes; an answer in the negative is no. And finally the word "limit". Positive or negative? Wouldn't a positive expression be unlimited? The word limit surely means something that is restricted within specific boundaries.

On my reading therefore, the sum total of the title

which Dylan "made" before he "made the song" adds up to a mass of negativity. I am of course aware of the view that the expression "no limit" could mean infinity and that the title thus implies an idealized love which goes on forever. But isn't that being somewhat over interpretive and reading into the title something that isn't actually there? You only really have to look at the individual words: the first of course is very important and one to which I will return in some detail later. The remainder qualify the first and they are:

"Minus" = negative symbol  
"Zero" = a negative number  
"No" = a negative answer  
"Limit" = a negative expression.

So how can it possibly be a positive love song?

Anyway, getting back to mathematics and the way Dylan used to introduce the song in 1965, this is what he actually said before disclosing that he had "made the title before" he had "made the song":

*The name of this song is a fraction. Love Minus Zero is on the top, and underneath is No Limit.*

In fact this situation of being "on the top" and "underneath" or being "above" and "below", or being "superior" and "inferior" aptly describes the relative positions of the two classes of participants who appear in the first two verses of the song. Dealing firstly with the values attached to the participant named as "my love" in the song, Dylan sings she is:

*without ideals or violence*  
(she is consequently neither "positive" nor "negative")

She is:

*true like ice, like fire*  
(she is likened to the elements)

She:

*laughs like the flowers*  
(she is likened to nature)

And:

*valentines can't buy her*  
(she has no interest in materialistic or financial persuasions).

This participant therefore, from the description of her abstract values, seems to be somewhat non-human. In comparison the "inferior" participants named collectively as "people" who appear in the first two verses of the song are very ordinarily human indeed: they frequent "dime stores and bus stations", they "read books, repeat quotations", they "carry roses" and "make promises by the hours".

This last description of activities of the "people", their conduct of "making promises by the hours", begs the question: to whom are these people who carry roses making promises? As Dylan mentions the superior participant "my love" in the very next line, I feel that it can be construed here that the "people" are making promises to "my" or possibly their own "love". So the participant named in the song as "my love" doesn't necessarily have to be Dylan's own "love"; as she has been placed into a relative juxtaposition with the other participants in the song, she could be the love of any one or indeed all of the "people".

I am reminded here of a visit my family and I made to the town of Lourdes when we were holidaying in South West France last year. Lourdes is probably best known as a place of great pilgrimage as a result of a young convent girl claiming, almost 140 years ago, that she saw visions of the Virgin Mary in a grotto near the town. That grotto has now grown into a complex of three churches and a massive underground basilica which can hold 20,000 people; and of course the place has a reputation for miracle cures. Our purpose in visiting Lourdes was out of curiosity more than anything else, but the sight of a collective course of human behaviour that we witnessed there was truly amazing. Hundreds, no - probably thousands, of people were queuing for a sip of water from a mountain stream that they were convinced would cure their ailments; people's faces transfixed in stare at a religious relic; people falling to their knees in repentance and prayer. I could not criticize this behaviour because I couldn't understand it but you could almost taste the vapours of blind faith. Now I do not wish to be in any way disrespectful here but if the line from Dylan's song was "People carry rosaries and make promises by the hours" then this would perfectly describe the conduct and relationship between the "people" and their "love" that I saw happening at Lourdes.

If you look at the word "love" in any adequate dictionary then you will find that one of the meanings of this sometimes thrown away word is "god's benevolent attitude towards man". So, on a literal, unemotional level, you could say that, according to the dictionary meaning: "God is love". And it just so happens that, in my view, the "love" that Dylan sings about in **Love Minus Zero/No Limit** is God. This explains the description of her as being non-human and of course her relationship to the "people" in the song is also explained - she is seen as being "above" - i.e. in heaven; whilst the people are "below" - i.e. on earth. Furthermore, if you have problems with "my love" being a "she" don't forget that, in 1965, Dylan was adamantly stating that "God is a woman".

I am not going to leave this view of the participants in the song without supporting it further although it must be said that I am not out to "prove" anything here for to seek to establish the "proof" in the

meaning of any Dylan song is an impossible venture. The important thing is to have a view and, if you're that way inclined, to try and express it. "The rest is not our business". T S. Eliot said that!

Back however to what I am saying. In addition to describing the inferior participants of the song as people who "carry roses", Dylan also sings that they "read books, repeat quotations".... draw conclusions..." and "speak of the future". If you accept that there is a religious perspective between the participants named as "people" and the participant named as "my love" in the song, as I have been endeavouring to show, then the conduct of the people that I have just quoted could quite well describe the gurus and false prophets that were in abundance in the 1960's. This conduct and the relationship between those kinds of people and God also occupied Dylan's mind when, in 1979, he was heavily involved in his own relationship with God. The following is an extract from Dylan's Gospel speech delivered to the somewhat hostile audience at Tempe, Arizona on the 26th November 1979:

*You wanna hear about this guru?... This guru, he made a film of himself. He had one of these big conventions. He has himself a convention about once a month. Like, they go off to a big city.... He must have had about five thousand people there, or ten thousand people there. Ten thousand people. And what he was doing on stage was, he was sitting there with a load of flowers and things.... he sure did look pretty though, sitting up there, kind of like on a throne, y'know?.... And a little while after that, he's talking about his philosophy. And he said that he was God - he did say that. He said that God's inside him and he is God. And they could think of him as God. I want to tell you this because they say there's many of these people walking around.*

The world has of course moved on since 1979 and the 1990's have already thrown up at least two false prophets - the two Davids - Koresh and Icke. The media splash concerning these two individuals showed them reading the bible, repeating quotations and speaking of the future. Yet this isn't too far removed from the situation that existed in the mid '60's when the media splash concerned visits by pop idols to Eastern Mystics and the name of the game was "flower power". And of course, all this further explains my view that the principal participants in the first two verses of the Dylan song under discussion are God and man; and the particular attributes of these participants as described in those two verses only goes further to support my interpretation that the actual connection referred to is the relationship that exists between God and man.

So whilst, in my view, the first two verses of the song set out and describe the differences and the

relationship between the song's principal participants, the last two verses deal mainly with imagery, but, again, the images portrayed aren't the kind that you would expect to find in a positive love song. They aren't bright and airy - they are dark and foreboding. And, despite the difference in tenor between the two halves of the song - the first dealing with the participants and the second dealing with imagery, these two halves are inextricably linked to express an overall and universal theme to which, again in my view, the song is directed. But bear with me....

Concentrating then on the images in the last two verses of the song, as I have said, Dylan paints a somewhat dark and foreboding picture. We have the sinister:

*The cloak and dagger dangles*

The implications of corruptness in the dark:

*Madams light the candles.*

The spooky:

*The bridge at midnight trembles.*

The turbulent:

*The wind howls like a hammer.*

And the downright dismal:

*The night blows cold and rainy.*

In the middle of these variously menacing images we have the picture of "statues made of matchsticks, crumble into one another". Who on earth would make statues out of matchsticks and then cause them to crumble into one another? It sounds cinematic doesn't it? It certainly makes me think of those old war films where, for instance, the image shown on the giant screen of a massive dam being busted by a bouncing bomb was actually filmed in a six foot square aquarium using miniature replicas; or where, today, an iron frame covered in scaled latex can convincingly be portrayed on the screen as a living and breathing Tyrannosaurus Rex. I bet somewhere in the history of cinema film technicians have made statues out of matchsticks which have then crumbled into one another.

This cinematic image causes me to go off on something of a tangent but, in true mathematical style, this tangent will return to and join the main curve of my idea regarding the song **Love Minus Zero/No Limit**.

My slight divergence starts with a line from Dylan's book **Tarantula**. It is the episode in the book entitled **Sand in the Mouth of a Movie Star** and concerns the quest by a strange man called "Simply That" to ascertain who it was that wrote the word

"what" in his garden. This little story is directly linked to the liner notes of **Bringing It All Back Home** where Dylan tells the tale of how he writes the same word on his favourite wall. Anyway, in the episode from **Tarantula**, **Simply That** enlists the aid of his friend Wally the Fireman. After **Simply** asks Wally if he could see any relationships between certain things, Wally replies: "No, but I see Bergman movies and I like Stravinsky quite a lot"... **STOP... STOP...** because I have arrived at the central point of my divergence - the connection between Dylan and the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman.

There has of course been a previously illuminating article dealing with the Dylan/Bergman connection which was written by Bert Cartwright and was published in the Summer 1986 # 10 edition of the American Dylan Magazine **Look Back** under the title: **Gathered from coincidence. Dylan and the films of Bergman**. That article dealt mainly with certain lines from Bergman movies which had found their way into Dylan's songs, but what I am trying to show here is that the universal theme upon which many of Bergman's films are based is also the underlying theme of the song **Love Minus Zero/No Limit**; and further to show a direct link between part of the song and a particular Bergman film.

First however: Ingmar Bergman. Of this great film director, Woody Allen said he is "probably the greatest film artist, all things considered, since the invention of the motion picture camera". In July 1993, Bergman celebrated his 75th birthday but I start with a trilogy of films that he made between 1961 and 1963 namely: **Through a Glass Darkly**; **The Communicants (Winter Light)**; and **The Silence**. The entire scripts to these films were of course all written by Bergman and these scripts were subsequently published in book form in 1963 under the title: **A Film Trilogy**. In his introduction to this book Bergman writes:

"The theme of these three films is a "reduction" - in the metaphysical sense of that word.

- ♦ **THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY** - certainty achieved.
- ♦ **THE COMMUNICANTS** - certainty unmasked.
- ♦ **THE SILENCE** - God's silence - the negative impression."

The "certainty" and the "silence" mentioned by Bergman in this introduction relate to man's relationship with God and the impetus for the creation of these films was no doubt underscored by Bergman's own obsession with God, and in particular with "God's silence". In turn this obsession probably emanated from Bergman's own experience as being the son of a Lutheran minister and thus no

doubt being bludgeoned with the axe of religious doctrine during the early part of his life.

All three films have, as their main characters, somewhat tragic figures but the axis of the trilogy comes in the middle film where the character Tomas, a priest who has profound doubts about the validity of his faith, has an exchange of words with a younger girl - Marta - who has fallen in love with him. Marta takes pity on Tomas because of his despair:

Marta: "What is it Tomas?"  
 Tomas: "To you, nothing"  
 Marta: "Tell me, even so"  
 Tomas: "God's silence"  
 Marta (wonderingly): "God's silence?"  
 Tomas: "Yes" (long pause) "God's silence".

Marta later responds to this explanation of despair:

Marta (irritated):  
 "Sometimes, I think you're the limit! God's silence, God doesn't speak. God hasn't ever spoken, because he doesn't exist. It's all so unusually, horribly simple".

This then is the axis point in the trilogy: The universally burning question as to the very existence of God - in particular having regard to "God's silence", i.e. his apparent non-intervention in times of trouble and despair. A further explanation of the Bergman trilogy is given in Geoff Andrews: *The Film Handbook*:

*Bergman's mature style arose in a trilogy about lost faith which asks how God can exist if pain and evil are the inevitable attendants of human life. In **Through a Glass Darkly**, a young woman's madness leads her to imagine God as an obscene spider; in **Winter Light** a doubting pastor, faced with a lover's illness and the threat of the Bomb, finds the ritual of prayer increasingly meaningless; in **The Silence**, two sisters, stranded in a foreign, war-torn city, yield, respectively, to desperate promiscuity and a lonely death.*

This apparent absence of God at crucial times, this question of "God's silence" Bergman describes in the introduction to the trilogy which I have quoted above as being "The negative impression"; and it brings my tangent back to, and joins with, the very first line of Dylan's classic 1965 song, a song which I have endeavoured to show as having a negative impression:

*My love she speaks like silence.*

If you recall, I have previously contended that the participant referred to as "my love" in the song is God; and as the song deals, in my view, with negative impressions, so it shows the negativity, the love minus sign, the zero aspect, the "no" answer to

the question: "Does God exist?" The first line then deals with "God's silence" but look how other lines show this non-interventionist aspect.

As people make promises to God, what does she do in response?

*She laughs like the flowers.*

In turbulent times, as statues crumble into one another, does she intervene to ease the warfare? No - she:

*Winks, she does not bother,  
 She knows too much to argue or to judge.*

It is the foundation of the atheist's argument regarding the existence of God. To the believer's assertion that there exists a loving, caring God, the answer must be: try telling that to the parents of innocent children who are struck down by stray bullets and bombs outside the war zones of Sarajevo; of Mogadishu; of Azerbaijan; of Kabul; of Phnom Penh; of Johannesburg; of Jerusalem; of Belfast; and of Warrington. Try telling that to the families who have lost loved ones to earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and drought. Try telling that to the ever growing number of destitute refugees on an ever narrowing road of flight. Where is this God in times of such trouble and despair? What is this God doing in answer to prayers and promises - is it that she just "winks, she does not bother" for "she knows too much to argue or to judge"; is it the case that she just "laughs like the flowers"; and when she speaks is it just "like silence"? You tell me.

Ah, but you might say that, later in the song, Dylan confirms that she does speak. What Dylan in fact says is that she speaks "softly" because:

*She knows there's no success like failure  
 and that failure's no success at all.*

Well, what the hell does that mean? That's speaking very softly indeed - almost to be unintelligible. There was in fact someone in the course of history who was held to be the person that spoke God's word. He spoke very softly and at times his parables were difficult to understand. He touched on this subject of succeeding through failure:

*He who is the least among you all - he is the greatest*  
 (Luke 9 v. 48)

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth*  
 (Matthew 5 v. 5)

*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God*

And finally,

*Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first*

(Matthew 19 v. 24 and 30)

So the moral of the story seems to be that if you want to succeed in the next life, whenever that may be, you first have to fail in this life. And if you've made your pile here, if you pop your clogs with loadsa money, you haven't got a camel's chance of passing through them pearly gates. But Dylan, accentuating the negative, questions this situation by adding the rider: "Failure's no success at all". Yes, I agree, Bob; try telling the destitute and the poor, the down trodden and the outcast, all those refugees, that they are having a successful life. I am sure that they will not see their failure as a success at all; especially if they have no belief.

You can never of course crack open a Dylan song and cleanly separate the lyrics from the music. It is always necessary therefore to have regard to both and, in my view, the music in this particular song emphasises part of the theme that, I am endeavouring to show, is contained in the lyrics - the theme of "God's silence"; the non-intervention aspect of a superior being, for if you listen to the music, it just meanders along, all the instruments seem understated, never intervening to assist or distract from Dylan's delivery, the melody line playing second fiddle to the words. The music just doesn't seem to have the same power as it does in other Dylan songs: but then I suppose we are talking here about a power that appears silent and unresponsive.

Returning then to the more powerful counterpart of the message contained in the lyrics, if you've stayed with me this far, you'll gather that my view of the song concerns the relationship between man and God; and it emphasises the negative impression brought about by "God's silence" - thus dealing with the universal question regarding the very existence of a god who doesn't put out his hand, show his face or talk to human kind. I have compared this theme to the same theme that is continually expressed in the films of the Swedish Director Ingmar Bergman. But I haven't quite finished yet for I consider that two of the lines from **Love Minus Zero/No Limit** could have a direct link to Bergman's most famous film; those lines being:

*In ceremonies of the horsemen,  
Even the pawn must hold a grudge.*

Dealing with the first line, then, "the horsemen" could mean anything I suppose from the riders in the Grand National to the entire horseback crew of the **Magnificent Seven**, but don't you think that the qualifying word "ceremonies" brings a religious intonation to the horsemen? And perhaps the most well known horsemen of all, in the religious sense that is, are the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse".

It is in the **Book of Revelation** that St. John the Divine relates the story of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. John had been banished by an oppressive Roman Emperor to spend a period of his life on the small Greek island of Patmos and it was on this island that John was a witness to various visions, the details of which are set down in the very last book of the bible. These visions have been subsequently interpreted as meaning the signs and events that will occur at the "end of the world". In one of these visions John saw a roll of written parchment in the hand of God, such roll being "sealed with seven seals". Contained in this roll, so the interpretation goes, were the very secrets of God's plan to overthrow the evil in the world and set up his own perfect kingdom to replace the world gone wrong. As each of these seals of the roll was opened so a new secret was revealed. So in fact it was perhaps akin to a "ceremony of the seals". Dylan's song however speaks of the "ceremonies of the horsemen".

It is, though, as the first four seals are opened that the "horsemen" appear - so instead of the "ceremonies of the seals" we lead on to the "ceremonies of the horsemen". In fact the four horsemen are symbolic and their riders stand for the four great destructive forces which are, in the times before the end, to be despatched against the evil world by the holy wrath of God: the first horse being: "The White Horse of Conquest"; the second: "The Blood-Red Horse of Strife"; the third: "The Black Horse of Famine"; and the fourth: "The Pale Horse of Pestilence and Death".

So there we have an interpretation of the line "In ceremonies of the horsemen" from Dylan's song; an interpretation which links this line of the song to the opening of the first four seals of the **Book of Revelation**. And here the teeth of coincidence disclose themselves because Ingmar Bergman's most famous film, and indeed a film that has been chosen by the British Film Institute for continual screening as being a key film in the history of the cinema is entitled **The Seventh Seal**.

The film in fact opens with a spoken quotation from the **Book of Revelation**: "And when the Lamb had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour ...".

The position therefore is that, on my interpretation, the line from Dylan's song where he refers to the "ceremonies of the horsemen" relates to the first four seals mentioned in the **Book of Revelation** and Bergman's film relates, in sequence, to the seventh seal. The smile of association grows wider however and more teeth of coincidence are exposed because it doesn't stop there. Dylan's song has the following line:

*Even the pawn must hold a grudge.*



Before I plunge deeper into my interpretation, we first have to know something more about the subject of the film **The Seventh Seal**. This brief resume is again taken from **The Film Handbook**:

*A medieval allegory in which a knight returns from the Crusades to challenge Death to a symbolic game of chess, the film evokes a plague-ridden world of suffering from which God is surely absent.*

The initial association here between that further line from Dylan's song and Bergman's film is the game of chess, and the first close movement between the central characters of the film namely the knight and the figure of Death, is the commencement of the game of chess by the knight holding a pawn and offering it to Death. It is interesting to note that Dylan's line doesn't have the usual "bear a grudge", but rather "hold a grudge", thus creating an image of something being physically held in the hand perhaps. The knight then holds a pawn, but as the film evolves it becomes clear that the knight himself is a pawn in the game of life being threatened by Death's devious conduct - and the "grudge" that the pawn holds? It is "God's silence", the very question of God's existence. This is illustrated by the following intimate exchange between the knight and Death:

Death: What do you want?

Knight: I want knowledge. Is it conceivable to grasp God with the senses? Why should he hide among half-promises and unseen miracles?.... I want God to put out His hand, show His face, talk to me.

Death: But he is silent.

Knight: I called to him in the dark. Sometimes it seems no-one is there.

Death: Maybe no-one is there.

Knight: Then life is an outrageous terror.

Then the knight later further contends:  
Faith is sore affliction; like loving someone who is out in the dark, silent, unresponsive.

Finally, on this point regarding the main theme and impetus of the film, when the British Film Institute chose **The Seventh Seal** as a "screen classic" they commissioned the Author and Broadcaster Melvyn Bragg to write an appreciation of the film. That appreciation turned into a little booklet from which the following autobiographical notes are taken. They are included here for the purpose of again taking the reader back to my view of what **Love Minus Zero/No Limit** is all about.

*The church's place in my life, in the life of many in that time and in such communities, was not*

*only strong, it was implacable. Going away to University, at a time when it was not uncommon to see the College Chapel well filled on a Sunday, had coincided with a climactic turbulence in beliefs which had been questioned only unconsciously and in public handled with apprehensive respect. **The Seventh Seal**, on a medium which had the power of finding me totally unprepared for it, articulated the questions I realised that I had not dared ask myself. What were the realistically true signs that a God existed? Where was the consistent evidence of any divine benevolence? What was the point of prayer? Was the idea of a personal, involved God entirely vain? The passion of the knight's doubts exploded my own, his determination to hold onto the outward exercises of belief when the inward credo had crumbled coincided precisely with my own situation. We are never as ready to be convinced as when we are secretly of the same persuasion in the first place and **The Seventh Seal** swept me into its simple perhaps but compelling and utterly modern view of the relationship between God and Man.*

There are many doom laden, dark and despairing images in **The Seventh Seal** but there is also a bright ray of light and hope. Two of the characters in the film are the husband and wife - Jof and Mia - who are members of a travelling show. Bergman has himself admitted that the names of these two characters are based on the biblical parents of the **New Testament** Joseph and Mary. Just like the real Joseph and Mary, Jof and Mia have a baby son and Jof foresees that one day his son will achieve perfection in the form of a juggling trick. The following dialogue between Jof and Mia explains the situation and also indicates the nature of hope portrayed in the film:

Mia: Michael must have a better life than ours.

Jof: He'll become a great acrobat, or a juggler who can perform the one impossible trick.

Mia: What trick is that?

Jof: To make a ball stop in mid air.

Mia: That's impossible.

Jof: For us, but not for him."

The presence of Jof and Mia - alias Joseph and Mary - together with their baby son bring a nativity image to the film, and here again those teeth of coincidence are exposed because Dylan also has, in his song, a nativity image in the line:

*Expecting all the gifts that wise men bring.*

And if that isn't a nativity image, then I'll eat a bowl of frankincense and myrrh!

The preceding line "bankers' nieces seek perfection" further interlinks with the kind of "perfection" that Jof's (Joseph's) son will seek: but of course in Dylan's song, where God is a woman, the child seeking perfection would also have to be female - a daughter would clearly be too obvious - a "niece" would be perfect!

The word "perfect" in itself is indicative of hope: a state to be achieved; a striving for the highest standards of excellence. And, returning to Bergman, the bright ray of hope that is epitomised by the characters Jof and Mia shines even brighter in the dying moments of the Swedish Master's film, thus demonstrating that life can never be all doom and despair; for life itself to continue there must be constant rejuvenation of dying matter, or at least the hope of such rejuvenation.

As, at the end of the film, Death claims nearly all the characters and leads them in a dance against the dawn skyline, the camera centres on Jof and Mia who have escaped the clutches of Death. Jof turns to Mia and quotes directly from Chapter 7 of the **Book of Revelation**:

*The rain washes their faces and cleans the salt of the tears from their cheeks.*

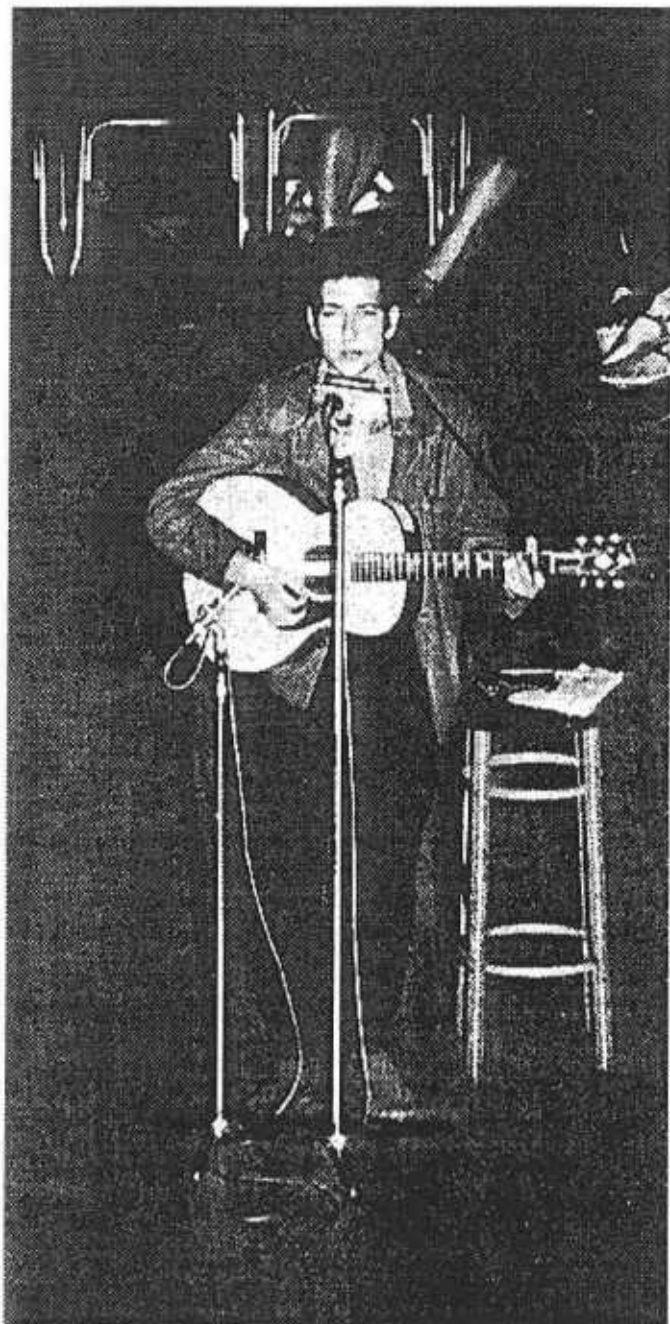
Jof then turns away and leads his humble caravan along the seashore into the morning sun, with Mia and their child safe beside him. I get the same feeling at the end of this film as I do when I see Alan Ladd ride into the sunset at the end of the western classic **Shane**. Something inside of me lives.

So it is also at the end of **Love Minus Zero/No Limit**. Cutting through all the negativity, all the emptiness brought about by an apparently uninterested God, all the sinister cloak and dagger scenes, all the frailty of crumbling statues and trembling bridges, we have the concluding lines:

*My love she's like some raven  
At my window with a broken wing.*

It's a funny thing, but if there was a bird at your window with a broken wing then you would have basically two choices - either ignore it so that it eventually hobbled away to inevitable death, or perhaps you would choose to open the window, let the bird in and endeavour to deal with its injury. The bird, broken wing duly mended, would thus be suitably rejuvenated and be able to fly away into the sunlight.

Dylan implies the choice in these final lines from his song and the bright ray of hope is inherent in that choice. The easiest course is naturally to ignore the bird, because it requires no action at all. But for those who choose the second course, to open the window and let the bird in, and remembering that the bird is "like" "my love" who, in my interpretation is God, then those people who open the window have to face the awful truth that their "bird" has a "broken wing": that they are accepting a God who, so the song goes, "winks" and "does not bother" to interfere, and who "speaks like silence". Of course Dylan is fully aware of all this for, in the liner notes to **Bringing It All Back Home**, he knowingly states: "Experience teaches that silence terrifies people the most.... i am convinced that all souls have some superior t' deal with". And that is in fact exactly the point where I came in.



The person most deserving of thanks was conspicuously absent from the inside front cover I mean, of course, The Man Himself. So, with thanks, I give him the last words of the last **Homer**.

### **Dylan interview from the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* April 7th 1994**

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Q: You're known for being unpredictable at your concerts in terms of what you play. What can the audience at your St. Louis concert expect?

A: *Well, I've got a new four-piece band. I don't know. Some old Dylan, some new, some of the acoustic stuff. The set list changes from night to night, so it's difficult to pin down what we've planned. Most of the songs will be recognizable to fans.*

Q: Are you going to do another rock album or stay with the acoustic, folk sound featured on your last 2 albums?

A: *I might have to make another one like the last 2. A lot of stuff didn't get on those. It'd be folk-oriented, but I'd use additional instruments that would give a little different sound ... the banjo, maybe even a mandolin, a dulcimer. The last 2 albums were necessary for me to do. I wanted to see if it was possible to play and sing and make a record all by myself with just a fraction of all that instrumentation and get a more full-bodied sound. Paul McCartney, Peter Gabriel and maybe even Phil Collins have done it where they've played all the instruments. I wanted to get as much out of those songs as possible. Sometimes you can rescue those songs by yourself without a lot of other stuff cluttering them up. The point you try to get across is more resonant.*

Q: Are you still writing new material or taking a break from that?

A: *Well, yeah, I do have a bunch of papers and notes and things lying around. Only time is going to tell when those things come out.*

Q: What's your favorite Dylan song?

A: *That's really hard to say. That would be scandalous. It's very difficult to pinpoint one. Each has its own moment.*

Q: What sort of new music do you enjoy?

A: *I usually listen to songs about things. My musical taste ran out in the mid-60's. I listened to all that stuff and I still do, it never gets tiresome for me. But there are a lot of new artists who've got a lot of illustrious things to say. [When pressed to name a few, however, he didn't offer any up.]*

Q: How do you like the new Judy Collins album, where she does only Dylan songs?

A: *Is that out yet? I know she was working on it. I haven't heard it. I go back a long time with her. We used to work together in coffeehouses.*

Q: What kind of touch do you keep with your folk buddies from the 60's.

A: *Joan [Baez] calls me from time to time. We did some shows in Germany a few years back. I was just on a Mike Seeger record.*

Q: It seems as if you're always doing new things and reinventing yourself. What keeps you moving and motivated?

A: *Just life itself. There's a certain non-transparency to life that keeps me motivated. I try not to work in a linear way. That's incumbent on what's given to you at any given moment. There might be inconsistencies to that, nevertheless, it does give you a degree of independence you might not get any other way.*

Q: Having had 3 decades to adjust, are you more comfortable being a living legend?

A: *I try to be an illuminated person. Nobody should put anyone on a pedestal - it really can damage a person's mentality and lead to ignorance. At that point, a person ceases to be a person.*

Q: How do you protect your privacy?

A: *I don't have any privacy, so there's really not much to protect.*

Q: While on the road, how do you take care of your health and spirituality? What kinds of things do you do for yourself?

A: *I try not to be a loafer. I don't work out. Maybe I'll ride a motorcycle or go horseback riding.*

Q: Your son Jacob has a band called the Wallflowers. What do you think of his band?

A: *His music is very humble. They have an impressive sound.*

Q: Have you played any gigs together?

A: *Just in the garage.*

Q: What kind of music does he play?

A: *I'm waiting for Neil Young to tell me.*

---

# Homer, *the slut*



*Strike Another Match,  
Go Start Anew*