

Homer, *the slut*



January 1992 Issue Five

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J.R. Stokes, Mel Gamble and Mark Carter write & draw for *Freewheelin'*, a privately circulated Dylan fanzine.

Some Other Kinds Of Songs comes from **The Van Morrison Newsletter** and I am very grateful to Stephen for this article. An advertisement for The Newsletter is lurking in these very pages. (Both the front and back covers of the latest issue feature Dylan.)

Photo Credits: Speaking of cover photographs both the the front and back covers of this issue are from original photographs by Andrea Vaucher.

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The Warmline: On my home number, 071 385 1114, I update Dylan news and gossip about twice a week. You can also leave any Dylan news after my message.

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There are no back issues available at the moment. They will be reprinted some time in the (near) future.

RENEWALS: Remember that there are four issues per year; therefore if you took out subscription with issue 3 your renewal is due anytime before May. (You have paid for Issues 3,4,5 and the Special Subscriber Issue.)

Homer, the slut
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(In the following discussion references are to the articles cited in "Homer the Slut" Issue 4)

Dylan's words - his words are more often than not the best starting point - in his comment about **Don't Think Twice** (quoted in the *Freewheelin'* album sleeve notes) constitute a strange statement; at least its meaning does not seem to me to be immediately obvious: - in what sense "better"? (I suppose all singing is intended to make us feel "better" in one way or another.) Does he mean feel less guilt for the way he has treated a sincere loving woman? Or is he trying to relieve his own sadness that the woman he has been loving and in whom he has invested his time was not the woman he thought she was or wanted her to be? He refers to the way older singers carried themselves; certainly Howlin' Wolf - one of the great prototype rhythm and bluesmen (and one who could play wonderful harmonica) carried himself with some confidence and conviction and in one of his earlier blues-rock songs - an incredible piano / guitar driven rocker recorded in 1951, *How Many More Years (Am I Gonna Let You Dog Me Around)?* - the singer finds himself in the same position as **Don't Think Twice**, the typical blues situation of having to move on from a woman for one reason or another. The same question of feeling better at his leaving comes up again and even in this more direct song Wolf comes to the conclusion: *I would feel much better if you would only just understand.* I conclude that the key to Dylan's comment is in the final sentence about being able to sleep at night - untroubled by a guilty conscience, having not wanted to hurt anyone with a "restless farewell".

The articles quoted in Homer's **Focus On** feature display conflicting points of view on whether or to what extent the song is a one-dimensional put down, in particular Paul Williams (PW) contradicts Jon Landau (JL): I think that neither is right. PW can see no evidence of a put down [1] in the song, whereas JL seems to see nothing but - although he admits to feeling that the sound of the song is giving him a different impression. Andrew Muir (AM), like John Herdman who sees an "emotional realism", is more balanced in his conclusion and surely right in seeing both contradictory positions reflected in the song. After all, William Empson made a career out of defining seven types of ambiguity (and the gradations in between) in literature.

Evidence of a put down - or that the singer is complaining about the woman - is available from the lyrics of **Don't Think Twice, It's All Right**:

- >> it is only now that the singer is "on the road" that the woman is "turning on her light [2], I suppose in a conscious effort to keep him
- >> the singer feels that she "could have done better"
- >> if she "don't know by now" presumably she never will.

Similarly it is the lyrics of the song that we should look at to see if there is any evidence of the "rejection" of the singer by the woman that PW says he finds in the song: "goodbye to the person who's rejected you (page 2)...song clearly about the singer and his feelings...the feeling of being a rejected lover (page 3)". Actually the lyrics of the song show that if there is a rejection the boot is on the other foot:

- >> "if you don't know by now" which I take to be suggesting that it should be as obvious to you as it is to me that "you're the reason":
- >> this reason is explained later by "you could have done better" (not that you've been unkind):
- >> and, more conclusively, the girl would do all she could to try to make him stay (call out his name, try to exercise her feminine charms - perhaps more generously than she has to date?).
- >> In fact she wanted more than he was willing or able to give ("she wanted my soul"), more than was ever in the relationship (*..we never did much talkin'*) and she is not willing or able to try to make him change his mind [the "try" suggests to me that it would have to be on his terms].

The song is self-evidently from the man's point of view but it is not one sided and not the one-dimensional put down that JL says he finds: the singer says we never did much talking - not all the blame is on her, he wishes there was something, and, after all, he gave her his heart but she was wasting his time by wanting too much.

He says that he does not mind and - in the *Freewheelin'* (finished) version "it don't matter": why does it not matter? Presumably because it is too late, past time cannot be regained despite our obsession with time: ultimately perhaps time is all we have. [3]

The question that remains from the song is whether he is being sincere or ironic/sarcastic in the *Don't Think Twice* refrain. I think that Alan Rinzler (page 1) is right to see "delicate balance" and "tension" between bitterness and optimism but as I hope will be obvious I do not agree with his paraphrase of the refrain "inflicted with your pain": the focus of the song is we not you. As he walks down the lonesome road he is thinking ("all the way"). It seems clear from the final verse that he is not entirely happy to be going, but as he has said more recently in his introduction to this song (to paraphrase): sometimes it is sad but you just have to face the truth.

We can compare this song with others Dylan was singing from about the same time: *It's Alright Mama* - Crudup's blues on the common theme of lamenting the love of a (good) man for an (unworthy) woman - but whatever she does he loves her still! The bluntness in *It Ain't Me Babe* and the directness in *Mama You Been on My Mind* [4] and a song which Dylan has never performed as far as we know, - *Love Is Just A Four Letter Word*. It is ironic that Joan Baez should have recorded this song, ironic in the light of her bitchy comment (quoted by Clinton Heylin) on introducing *Don't Think Twice*. But I do think that Baez was right to introduce it as a song about an affair that has gone on too long. The idea of wasted time recurs: "I've wasted enough time to think I see..."; and the regret that what was "supposed to last for eternity" does not. *Most of the Time* is mentioned appositely by AM - this is a song which raises the unanswered question "what about the rest of the time"; we might compare Paul Simon's *I Am A Rock* where much of the song's power seems to come from the suspicion that the singer is being less than frank.

In *Don't Think Twice*, when the singer takes his leave, Dylan settles on the word farewell since "goodbye is too good a word": perhaps he is thinking of the *Leaving of Liverpool (Farewell)* but it is an excellent example of Dylan's characteristic word-play. The explanation of this line could be simply limited to the humorous intent; sometimes, in the selection of a word, musical and metrical considerations - the very sound - take precedence over other considerations; Nick de Somogyi in *Telegraph 40* has discussed this play on "good" inconclusively. Maybe Dylan is thinking of another Howlin' Wolf song, where farewell is the chosen word..."fare-thee-well...never see you no more..." (from *Smokestack Lightning (Let A Poor Boy Ride)* where sadly the singer finds himself again in the same old situation of having to leave).

I have indicated some points of disagreement with JL and PW where I think that the song has been misread (not that I would claim any infallibility in my alternative interpretation but I do think that our interpretation should be based on what is actually said in the song before we consider what could be behind the lyrics; part of what makes poetry - like many of Dylan's songs - so valuable is that there is so much room for interpretation.) There are still two more fundamental points where I disagree with the whole approach: firstly what I might call the biographical approach and secondly PW's comment that JL's article - which is propounding what I think is the untenable thesis of Dylan's myth making - is "well considered".

I do not believe that any biographer could "make it clear that the song addresses Dylan's feelings about Suze" and PW actually recognizes this when he goes on to talk about creating "a fictional story" out of actual circumstances; but he still goes on to misread the song by trying to make it fit his supposed understanding of what actually may or may not have gone on between Dylan and Rotolo: in this regard at least I prefer Wilfrid Mellers' approach (page 6) where he talks in general terms about the "truth of feeling" which can be found in Woody Guthrie (or for that matter Howlin' Wolf or Shakespeare). Dylan himself has referred to the "limiting" effect of "critics" and I suppose this sort of biographical approach to his songs (and such for further

example as PW applied in his *What Happened?*) to be a good illustration of what he meant. Dylan has also said that personal biographical details are to be found in his songs if you know where to look but that equally much of his material has come from observation (or the newspapers - just change the words around !).

In the same way as PW admits that he is confusing "fact" and "fiction", JL admits (in his *John Wesley Harding* article from which the comment on **Don't Think Twice** is taken) that there are many more songs that do not fit the "continually evolving mythical view of himself and society" which he is attempting to foist on Dylan than that do; but this - JL goes on to suggest - is only because of Dylan's "own desire to get outside of it". Is this the man who saw the future of rock and roll? This is probably the sort of stuff that provoked Dylan's outburst against critics in the Biograph notes, but don't think twice it's alright.

Footnotes:

1. I am perhaps quoting unfairly here - PW says that he can find no evidence of a put down, only of dissatisfaction with the woman's actions. I cannot understand the distinction Paul is trying to make: the singer is putting the woman down because he is dissatisfied; if his dissatisfaction was such that he could put up with I suppose that he would not be leaving.
2. Michael Gray's comment on the light, though erudite, does not seem appropriate to me: I take it that Dylan is referring to the light of the feminine attraction as in for example the Bobby Bland song **Turn On Your Lovelight**. It is characteristic of Dylan's wit that the reference is turned almost into a joke: the woman turns on her lovelight in an attempt to make the man stay but he cannot see it because he is already "on the dark side of the road"; while the woman could be turning on the light in the darkness of her house ("before the rooster crows") looking in vain for her lover who has already gone - already down the road where the light does not shine, equally the dark could allude to the cruel side in the man's nature. The literary references (including AM's to "Othello") to the source of the notion of the woman's light do elucidate the depth of the image.
3. In the Second Verse Of **Restless Farewell** Where Dylan talks about not hurting knowingly (alluded to above) he goes on to say that we need time to make amends, time which we do not have.
4. PW suggests that in **Don't Think Twice** the singer would beg - again I find no evidence for this in the lyrics (he only wishes there was something she would do - but because of the emotional realism that prevails accepts that there is nothing): nor can I find any trace of dignity (even though we search throughout literature !) or confusion (other than in the lyrics of the unfinished Gaslight version - the "aa's" and "mmm's" as transcribed by AM!). It is interesting to note that in **Mama You Been on My Mind** the singer explicitly states that he is not pleading.

Jim Heppell 6/1/92

Thanks to Jim for this response. For the benefit of new readers I should explain that *Focus On* is a regular section consisting of one song being looked at from a variety of angles. Basically this consists of me collecting every piece of writing I can, and, in the case of the last issue, adding my own interpretation. Although the section is popular, written response has been very disappointing. The songs so far covered have been: **It Ain't Me Babe**, **Desolation Row** and **Don't Think Twice, It's All Right**; the next song will be **Love Minus Zero/No Limit** - perhaps some of you would like to send in your views in advance? After that we'll try something from another decade, though the sixties songs are so good, don't you think?

Van Morrison

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Owing to demand there
has been a limited
reprint, or at least
photocopying - not sure
yet - of issues 1 and 2.
Copies are available at
£1.50 each including
postage. Hopefully the
same will be done with
issue 3, also sold out, to
coincide with the next
one.

Newsletter

A Tape To Revisit

The Temples In Flames Tour 1987 split Dylan's fans down the middle:

One Half	The Other
<i>The concerts were too short</i>	<i>Back to his brilliant best</i>
<i>Dylan's voice is shot</i>	<i>His voice is great</i>
<i>The sets are a shambles</i>	<i>The short sets suit him better</i>
<i>Dylan doesn't care anymore</i>	<i>Dylan is very intense and it's great to hear all these songs we've never heard him perform before</i>
<i>What's he wearing on his head?</i>	<i>Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers are his best backing band since The Band</i>

Obviously, I belong with the group on the right hand side and this article will follow that way of thinking.

The credit for these shorter and more varied sets must be given to The Grateful Dead, who re-introduced Dylan to some of his older songs. **Frankie Lee and Judas Priest, Queen Jane Approximately, John Brown, Tomorrow Is A Long Time, and The Wicked Messenger** were given rare and in some cases first outings. Unfortunately, however, Dylan was not in particularly good form and even appeared bored during the six date mini-tour.

Temples in Flames started - appropriately enough! - in a blaze of publicity. This was Dylan's first public appearance in Israel. Dylan's nerves got the better of him and, although he played a fairly decent show, it was not up to his high standards or audience expectations.

Savaged by critics, Dylan was determined to put things right and that was exactly what he did in Jerusalem. He gave a tremendous show which, unbelievably, was cut short by a power failure.

The show was a great critical success and Dylan came to Europe in good spirits. What follows is a brief summary of the next concert - in Basle.

Basle 10th September 1987

Forever Young: this starts very positively but, inexplicably,¹ Dylan totally forgets the words. The song ends up a real mess.

Shelter From The Storm: a really excellent version, Dylan sings it very well. There are no lyrical catastrophes, though he does sing the last verse twice!

Seeing The Real You At Last: a superb performance of a song that Dylan seems to love to sing.

When The Night Comes Falling From The Sky: a similar type of performance to the one on the 1986 US Tour. Dylan forgets occasional words but this doesn't detract from a stunning performance.

Queen Jane Approximately: this is the first time that the Heartbreakers have played this in concert. Unfortunately, it shows. Dylan struggles on, extremely bravely, but to no avail.

When I Paint My Masterpiece: this is brilliant - just what listening to and watching Dylan is all about. Dylan at his very best.

¹ I've heard a good few explanations actually, Andy, from people who insist on tapping their noses while giving them - Ed.

Frankie Lee and Judas Priest: More of the same, even Dylan forgetting the odd line doesn't seem to matter.

Clean Cut Kid: yet another great all round performance. I don't particularly like this song but this is the best version I've heard.

I Want You: a long harp solo leads us into this wonderful song. It is performed quite well, though Dylan's voice is showing some signs of strain.

Masters Of War: just a workmanlike performance of this old standard.

I Shall Be Released: a good, solid performance of one of Dylan's most played songs of recent times.

Trust Yourself: a very sloppy version, Dylan sounds knackered.

Encores:

In The Garden: this is a fantastic performance of one of Dylan's favourite songs. He pulls out all the stops on this one.

Like A Rolling Stone: typical Dylan riding the crest of a wave, he sounds like he could sing all night.

Why do I love this particular tape? For me it captures all the exciting things that make Dylan the performer we all love to watch and hear: The way he messes up *Forever Young* after a very good start to the song and then follows that disaster with a near perfect *Shelter From The Storm*. Then we have his battle against the Heartbreakers' uncertainty (unusual for them) during *Queen Jane Approximately*. Next he plays probably the most brilliant single song performance of the tour - and one of his best ever - in *When I Paint My Masterpiece*. Even when Dylan's voice appears to be failing him towards the end of the show, he performs two wonderful encores.

These are the sort of things that could only happen at a Bob Dylan concert.

Give this tape a listen - you won't be disappointed.

Andy Wright



Homer, the slut

By David Wingrove

I hated Dylan. I'd always hated Dylan: ignorantly, irrationally, the way some people hate women or blacks. I hated his drony, tuneless voice, the country and western "feel" of so many of the songs I'd heard, the "sameness" of so much of his music. But most of all, I guess, I hated the idea of Dylan: the man as a guru, hobo, rock-star. He seemed ludicrously old fashioned, a throw back: something washed-up on the beach from some previous cycle of rock's brief history. As for myself, I was much of my age, a "progressive" man, into Led Zeppelin, Yes, Genesis, jazz-rock fusion of the Mahavisnu and Soft Machine ilk, Frank Zappa, electronic space-rock and anything strange and unlikely from mainland Europe. But there were other things I liked. Joni Mitchell and Neil Young, to name but two.

It was the summer of 1977, I was twenty two years old and I was breaking up with the young woman I'd been obsessively in love with for the previous six years. Unbearded, I lived in song-lines and the delusion of a perfect, ideal love. I was reading science fiction, Hesse, Nietzsche, Lawrence. And I was writing. Writing my way to redemption. Or so I believed.

The year before I'd joined a small and disreputable sounding organisation called the British Science Fiction Association. There, through the letter columns of the house journal, I got into correspondence with a young Scot by the name of Andrew Muir. A Dylan man who didn't like Zeppelin. The unlikely happened. Slowly, with an unwearying patience, he worked at my prejudice, eroding it. Until...

Well, this is the story of one man's conversion. The tale of an infidel amongst the angels. Of love lost and love found and of how music can be the catalyst in life's most important changes.

1977. The year of the Queen's Jubilee and of Punk. As summer drifts into autumn I try again, hoping against hope to make things right with Loraine. It is a frustrating, difficult, tormented period of my life, yet not without its highs. I am editing the BSFA's critical magazine, Vector by now, following in the footsteps of Michael Moorcock. New friendships are developing all the time as I get in contact with people from all over the country. And all the time I am working on a long contemporary novel, SARA'S TALES, about a young woman and her experience of life in the seventies. A lot of pain and hope are poured into that book. A lot of my youth. But behind all - threading it all together and making sense of it - lies the music. And newest of all, a growing love for the work of the man I once hated - Bob Dylan.

I don't know quite when it happened, when the switch over occurred and I became a convert, but I know that it wasn't a blinding flash. No, it was more like a gradual wearing away at all of those self-imposed barriers. Slowly, I learned to listen to the man. To hear what he was saying. Time and again I would find myself drawn

away from what I was doing, to get up and cross a room and put a track on once again and this time really listen to it. And then, when Andy sent me through a copy of WRITINGS AND DRAWINGS, I could work with it beside me and flick through it, reading the words as they came from the speakers across the room, and letting Dylan's song-lines spawn ideas and images, then setting those down. Not that it was just Dylan back then. He still had to contest with the words and music of Jackson Browne and Neil Young and over and above all - Joni Mitchell. But suddenly his words, his music had become part of my life.

There was one particular track and one particular album which, perhaps more than any others, changed me.

The track was Tangled Up In Blue, in a bootleg recording Andy had sent through to me. A minor key version from some while before BLOOD ON THE TRACKS, with a wholly different emphasis and a number of different lyrics. beautiful, spine-tingling version that in itself made me shed any last illusions I may have harboured about Dylan being dull. 14 years on, it still has the same effect on me.

The album was the double set, MORE BOB DYLAN GREATEST HITS, in its pre CD incarnation (ie., plus Positively 4th Street and New Morning but minus She Belongs To Me and It's All Over Now, Baby Blue). From the perspective of fourteen years I can say quite positively that there are better albums - BLOOD ON THE TRACKS, DESIRE, BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME, the recent BOOTLEG SERIES, but none which could - at that particular period in my life - have made such an impact on me. Maybe it was the sheer range of Dylan's work that suddenly impressed - that made me reformulate my opinion - but I think a lot of it had to do with how much these songs suddenly made sense; how they suddenly fitted into the texture of my life. The best music gets into your blood, becomes the blood of your being. So with this. And, like all good things, that album made me go out and get more by the man.

A door opened and I stepped through.

From the opening bars of Watching The River Flow, the album is less a GREATEST HITS compilation than a journey through mood and language, through a landscape of continually changing textures and sounds. In that abrupt transition from the powerful rock rhythms of Watching The River Flow to the simpler acoustic sound of Don't Think Twice, It's All Right lies something of the magic of Dylan. And even if, back then, I was none too good at "walkin' down that long, lonesome road", I understood the sentiment only too well. Here was a man who, from his experience of life, was speaking to me direct. Was clothing the feelings with words:

"I once loved a woman, a child I'm told
I gave her my heart but she wanted my soul."

How well I knew that feeling. Just as, when, some while later, I first heard **I Don't Believe You**, I knew that Dylan had been where I was then. That he had suffered the death of love and the onset of indifference - worse than hatred - in a relationship. And survived.

Lay Lady Lay, the third track on the album, was one I knew from years before. Perhaps the only track I knew on the whole album, and the only Dylan track that I'd have confessed to liking before my conversion (an aberration, I'd have claimed!). A beautiful love song, its lyrics are haunting -

"I long to see you in the morning light.
I long to reach for you in the night."

There's something quintessential, something timeless about the song despite its clear country music referents: a directness and to-the-bone simplicity about its sentiments:

"Why wait any longer for the world to begin
You can have your cake and eat it too."

After breaking up with Loraine for a second time, in late December that year, those lines were often in mind as I sought my elusive perfect lover. Waiting for the world to begin. It seemed as if I had been doing that all my young life.

Stuck Inside Of Mobile, the final track on the first side of the album is one of those tracks that, even now, I feel uncomfortable with. For some reason its lyrical cleverness doesn't touch me the way the simplicity of the three opening songs does. Back then I hated the bugger. I wondered (aloud and at length, to anyone who'd care to listen) how such a talented writer could pen such a self-indulgent pile of crap. As a result I rarely played the track, but moved on, onto safer ground, and the first track on side two, **I'll Be Your Baby Tonight**.

Before the summer of 1977, if anyone would have told me that I'd have fallen in love with a track that had harmonica, steel pedal guitar and a slow thudding bass-drum line, I'd have laughed, but there's no doubt that this was one of three songs on the album that I fell instantly in love with. Nor can I say - even now, after long thought - why this is so. After all, it's not that the lyrics are brilliant, and the tune is simplicity itself. But there's the same quality to this that I discovered some years later when listening to the songs from Dennis Potter's **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** - the same simple enchantment.

The most memorable lyric of the album, however, came from the next track, **All I Really Want To Do** which just has to be the perfect recipe for a relationship. Along with Joni Mitchell's **All I Want** (surely and echo, conscious or otherwise, of Dylan's song); it was this that acted on me most directly. Here, defined, was the balance I had been seeking - the perfect way for a man to treat a woman, and

vice versa. But the song was more than that, really. It was also an admonishment to me. Here set down in the most direct manner possible, were all the ways I'd fucked up beforehand. Here - defined not as the negatives I was guilty of, but as the positives I ought to have done - were all the reasons for my failed relationship. The reasons why I'd killed whatever love we'd had.

"I don't want to straight-face you,
Race or chase you, track or trace you,
Or disgrace you or displace you
Or define you or confine you
All I really want to do
Is, baby, be friends with you"

That was the ideal, anyway, but old patterns die hard. In those early months of 1978, I went out with no less than seven women, fell in and out of love (or so I thought) each week, experienced massive highs and lows, wrote furiously, got drunk often, and all the while the music formed a thread, a backdrop to my life - colouring and informing it. Connecting it all. In my letters to Andy, I stole a line from Jackson Browne's **The Pretender** and signed myself 'The Happy Idiot', struggling for the legal tender - a reference to my "career" in the National Westminster Bank, where, even then, I knew I didn't fit. And each morning, in the staff room, while looking in the mirror, straightening my tie, I would begin to envision a time when I wouldn't have to wear a tie anymore. When I'd throw off the shackles of conformity and begin anew. In a very real sense, I was waiting for the world to begin.

"Ah but I was so much older then,
I'm younger than that now."

Looking back at my journal for that time, I understand Dylan's lyric from **My Back Pages** so much better than I did then. Indeed, there's a real truth to the song - in its casting off of youthful ideologies and illusions - but back then I simply liked the tune and the clever inversion of expectations in the chorus. It was a retrospective and, having no distance from which to look back (and despite Dylan's admonition), I had no way of comprehending the song. There are two lines, particularly, which capture how I was back then:

"Pounced with fire on flaming roads
Using ideas as my maps"

So I was: between the two great loves of my life, in a job I was beginning to despise, with a vocation (writing) which was taking over more and more of my time, and with my head on fire with other people's words. In no other period of my life have I been as open to the influence of words and ideas as I was in those early months of 1978. Little was I to know, therefore, how prophetic the next song on the album was, for, within fifteen months, I would have quit my job, only two months after the election of a new Conservative government:

"I ain't going to work on Maggie's farm no more."

Maggie's Farm is, for me, the other Dylan. The one who goads me to anger. I've always had a soft spot for hard political songs - David Crosby's **What Are Their Names?**, Tom Robinson's **Power In The Darkness**, Billy Bragg's **Between The Wars** - and Dylan has always been capable of writing great songs of this kind. But **Maggie's Farm** has always been something special, even before Steve Bell adopted the title for his scathing cartoon strip. But it wasn't just the telling nature of lyrics that won me over, it was the way Dylan sung it. It was listening to this song that made me realize for the first time how carefully Dylan adapted his voice - how much he changed it - to suit each song. Listen to **Lay Lady Lay** and **Tomorrow Is A Long Time** and hear just how distinctive the styles are - almost as if it were a different person singing on each of the tracks. **Maggie's Farm** is special for another reason, too. It made me go out and buy **BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME**, and so introduced me to **Gates of Eden**, surely one of the best songs ever written.

I'm afraid that the last track on side two, **Tonight, I'll Be Staying Here With You** has always left me cold. Maybe it's the way Dylan sings it, in his higher pitched 'singing' voice, as if distanced from his own material, but it has also to do with the lyrics. Whilst it shares a great deal with **I'll Be Your Baby Tonight**, it lacks that track's direct and touching simplicity. There is no real edge to the song, and that "whistle blowin'" is just a cliché, untransformed by Dylan's usual genius for putting new life into old images.

Back then, in early '78, adrift from one relationship and without an emotional anchor in my life, it's little wonder that the music that moved me most of the time was that which focused in upon the central concern of my life. Love. Thus, the opening track to side three, **Positively 4th Street**, didn't touch me. It was the kind of thing I'd hated Dylan for, pre-conversion. The repetitive nature of the song, coupled with that off-putting organ sound, made me frankly loath the song. I never played it. Listening to it now, though, across the years, whilst I still don't like the tune, I find the lyrics excellent. Like a lot of Dylan, I like this better as poetry than as song.

But the next track on the compilation, **All Along The Watchtower** had always been a favourite in its Jimi Hendrix incarnation. Hearing the original, I could see exactly why Hendrix fell in love with the song, even to the point of mimicking the harmonica parts on wah-wah guitar. I love this aspect of Dylan, where he tells a story by means of an interconnected series of images - even if the story is couched in fairly cryptic terms. For me this is one of the most evocative of Dylan's early songs.

The Mighty Quinn I could always take or leave. I always felt it was a decent pop song, and not much more. The kind of thing Dylan could probably do while mucking about in the back room with the boys. Much

better was the next track, **Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues** which clearly prefigures not only the whole **DESIRE** album, but much of Jackson Browne's early work. There's that same laid back atmosphere, that same Mexican referent at the heart of the tale, and a lovely piano and guitar sound. And, once more, it's a good story, too.

The final track on this side, however, was the track I continually played - time and again - throughout late '77 and early '78. **A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall** is, without doubt, one of Dylan's real classics; the ultimate dark, prodromic vision. But again, it's the simplicity of its delivery - the wistful voice and the solitary guitar - that makes this so impressive; that sends a real shiver down your spine when you hear it. And, as a writer - a science fiction writer, in essence - I was equally impressed by the structure of the song, the mother asking and the blue-eyed son answering. Like so many of Dylan's songs, there was an experimentation with story telling which fascinated me. A way of expression that, whilst I made no attempt to imitate it, made me conscious - as much as Joyce and Woolf, Mann, Kafka and Lawrence - that there were a thousand ways to tell a story or write a song.

The sheer cheerfulness of **If Not For You**, the love song that opens side four of the album, took some time to work its magic on me. In those bleak introspective days of early '78, despairing of ever finding my perfect mate, I thought the music inane, the lyrics trite, a lie even. It was late March before I understood how perfect an expression of a certain mood the song was. By then the I had met Susan, a dark haired, green eyed beauty, who gave me a lift home, came in for coffee and has stayed these last thirteen and a half years, bearing me three equally beautiful young girls. So this song, so often played in the car, with Sue seated alongside me, has a particular sweetness to my ear.

There is no doubt that love transforms how we see things, and, for me, part of the magic of Dylan - and those other artists I love for the same reason - is that, in their work, they chart the changes, the highs and lows, of love. In their songs the mood, the moment lives again, each time the music plays.

The next track, **New Morning** continued in much the same mood as **If Not For You**, yet somehow I never liked it half as much. When the CD version of the compilation came out, I found to my delight, that they'd replaced **New Morning** with the beautiful **It's All Over Now, Baby Blue**. It was the next song however, that, more than any other on the album, I felt was a work of sheer genius.

"There's beauty in the silver, singin' river,
There's beauty in that rainbow in the sky,
But none of these and nothing else can touch
the beauty
That I remember in my true love's eyes."

Tomorrow Is A Long Time is, and remains, one of the most achingly beautiful songs I've ever heard. There's so much hurt in that song, so much loss and longing, but also so much tenderness. When I first heard it, it was Loraine who came to mind when I listened to the song, but it was not until June of 1978, and my first and only separation from Sue, that the song took on a deep personal significance. June '78 was significant for another reason. It was then that I first saw the man himself, at Earls Court, Andy there, standing on his seat beside me, two rows from the front, as Dylan sang **Tangled Up In Blue** and brought tears to our eyes.

By that summer of 1978 I had decided that my days at the NatWest were numbered. I got my UCCA forms and began applying to universities for entrance in September '79. That would give me three years in which to write and re-educate myself. And afterwards? Well, afterwards I was going to be a writer. And Sue supported me in that aim. But writing is a long hard slog and there are times when even the most determined - as I was - must bow before the weight of failures and rejections. It was then that the next track, **When I Paint My Masterpiece**, would come to mind:

"Someday, everything is gonna be different
When I paint my masterpiece."

Along with the Beatles' **Paperback Writer**, I would find myself singing the song, tongue-in-cheek, and the mood would lift. And even if it was another decade before things became "smooth like a rhapsody", Dylan's words helped get me through.

I Shall Be Released is one of those songs which has become so familiar that it's hard to see it fresh. I like the song, but lack the experience to give this any personal resonance. I used to consider that a failing in myself - a lack of empathic imagination - but a similar track, James Taylor's **Sleep Come Free Me** (on the 1979 album, **FLAG**) manages to create in me all those emotional reverberations that **I Shall Be Released** fails to. So maybe the Dylan song is too generalised to succeed in that deeper manner.

If there's one song on this whole double album that, when it comes on, I sit back and sing along at full volume, it's the next one, **You Ain't Goin' Nowhere**. The lyrics in **WRITINGS AND DRAWINGS** bear only scant relationship to the song I know (from this version), with its direct references to McGuinn and the Byrds, but what the hell. Anyone who listens to Dylan for long enough begins to enjoy the constant shift and change of the lyrics from version to version, even to look out for it. But this is just so filled with the spirit of life, with joy, and I've often felt they ought to dish it out on the NHS instead of anti-depressants.

And so the album ends, with **Down In The Flood**. Another style, another mood, and Dylan turning full circle, from folk and rock to blues.

Music is important to us. More important than most media commentators or cultural pundits admit or allow. It is not merely style wallpaper for our ears, it can affect our life choices: what we do and why we do it. For some of us, indeed, music is life and certain musicians - Dylan for one - have taken on the role of mediators between us and what happens to us in our lives, much like old-time priests and savants. The media trivialises this, plays down the importance of this role by elevating any good-looking, slickly dressed moron (Vanilla Ice, M.C. Hammer) to the stature of super-star merely on the grounds of product sales. But the truth is other, and we know that.

For me personally, Dylan is important for other reasons. I don't see eye to eye with the man over a great many things, nor would I count him my guru - in that I'm still very much and infidel amongst the angels - but back in the summer of '77, through '78, the music Dylan had made was important to me, nay vital to me. And later (for me), with **BLOOD ON THE TRACKS** and **DESIRE**, he became a firm part of my life - of the words I set down on the page and the love I had for a good woman.

In 1928, just before his death, D.H. Lawrence wrote a short article for the Evening News, *Hymns In A Man's Life*, in which he wrote of the importance of the hymns he learned as a child in his Non-Conformist Chapel:

"They mean to me almost more than the finest poetry, and they have for me a more permanent value, somehow or other."

So it is, for me and for many others of my generation, with rock music. So it is with much of the music I have been talking about here. Like Lawrence's hymns, these songs are "woven deep into (my) consciousness".

Indeed, there are two lines of Dylan's from **Shelter From The Storm**, that could almost be said to define what it is I'm trying to do whenever I sit down to write - that lie there, unstated, behind the text, that are there somewhere in the air every moment I strive for expression against the whiteness of the page:

"Beauty walks a razor's edge
Some day I'll make it mine."

It's that desire to walk the razor's edge - to set down something perfect, something "beautiful", by which I mean something true - that keeps me going; indeed, that kept me going through thirteen years of "failure" as a writer. Simple really. But then, I wasn't to know that back in the summer of '77. Back then I hated Dylan.

(C) David Wingrove, 1991

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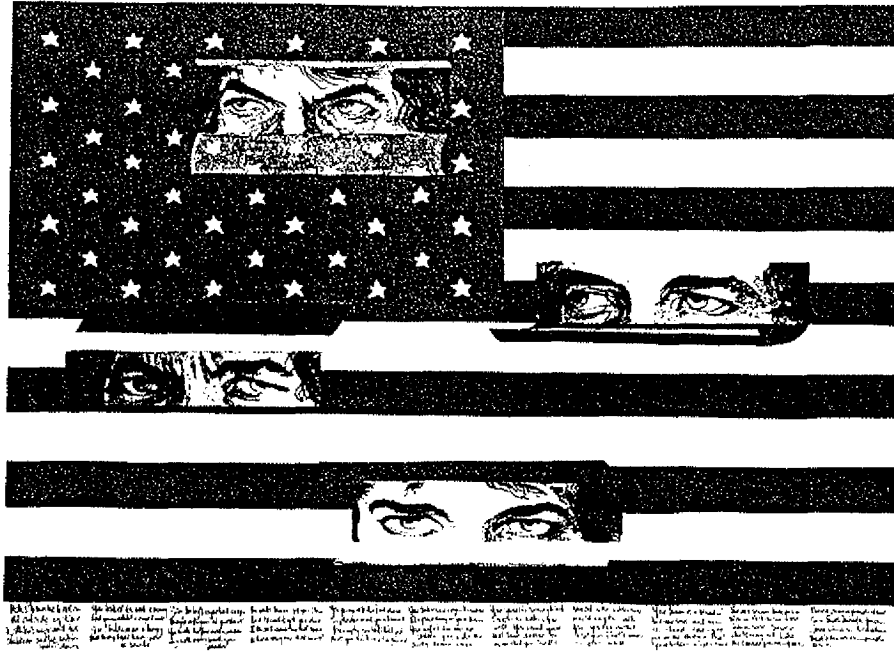
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Has anyone heard of Louis Prima?

Three unforgettable nights in Italy

By Stephen McGinn and Andy Nieurzyla

Touching down at Rome's Ciampino airport in the early afternoon of June 6, there was a keen sense of anticipation about Van Morrison and Bob Dylan's three concerts in Italy.

Our host in Rome, former music journalist Alessandro Sacammonno warned that the omens were not good. The hall in Rome, the indoor basketball stadium the Palaeur, was not, in his opinion, well suited to music and would be very hot.

We were able to see a bit of the eternal (not Kansas) city as we crawled through the traffic-choked streets of the ancient metropolis. For this contact lens wearer, the dust was a hazard that took a bit of getting used to but it had the advantage that through permanently half shut eyes it was possible to ignore some of the hairier incidents taking place on the roads.

We set out for the show in the early evening when it was still very hot. Approaching the Palaeur from the back, along one of Rome's wide avenues, we could see that the circular venue, set atop a hill, also contained a huge dome extending from the roof which was undoubtedly the cause of the unsatisfactory sound later in the evening.

Entering the arena, we found ourselves in the standing section on the floor of the hall. Looking skywards, in the huge circular, tiered building, we noticed that many of the owners of our 32,000 lira tickets, showing just a bit of local knowledge, had opted to squeeze into the upper balcony rather than fight for positions in front of the stage.

There were cheers every time an instrument was brought out. The more laid-back element were content to sit in little huddles and go on rolling their joints.

Soon it was noticeable that three extra mikes had been placed on the stage, as well as stands holding charts. The explanation came as the lights went down at nine and the majority of the Van Morrison band walked on stage, accompanied by Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley and Pee Wee Ellis - the JB's.

The latter performed two instrumentals, a funky opener and a quiet reading of James Brown's *It's A Man's, Man's, Man's World* with the band led by Pee Wee's swooping hand and dipping sax.

Then Steve Gregory, Richie Buckley and Haji Akbah came on to the stage, the band struck up *And The Healing Has Begun* and, soon after, Van Morrison strolled on, lifted the sax and the show was on.

In a stunning hour long set, Van had the Roman crowd eating out of his hand as he lifted them with *Whenever God Shines His Light*, joked through a comic *Bouna Sera* and teased them on *Send In the Clowns*, leaving the stage in mid line and returning to deliver the climactic line and they loved every minute.

We enjoyed the set immensely, but with slight reserva-

tions. The sound was very poor. In the instrumental opening there was no problem but as soon as Van Morrison sang his voice got lost somewhere in the echo caused by the huge dome, which houses the massive electronic basketball scoreboard. It is likely that the sound may have been alright up in the top tier but on the floor it was terrible.

The heat was also intense but worth it for an hour of vintage Van. One surprise was the absence of Georgie Fame, but he was at least there in spirit, his Hammond at the disposal of Howard Francis who showed himself to be more than handy on the keyboards and a very good, if slightly shy, singer. The highlight for us was when Van called on the JB's for the closing song, *Vanlose Stairway*. There was a minor mix up over the mikes, understandable in a clearly unrehearsed section, but the presence of six horns in that wonderful love song was just glorious.

At the end of the set, the most acceptable option was to fight through the densely packed crowd on the floor and take advantage of one of the gates on to the seated terraces, now no longer marshalled by the green uniformed usherettes. All the best seats were obviously taken so we moved to the empty ones beside the stage. This gave a clear view, if slightly behind the mikes, of the stage and, also, of the backstage area.

Some forty minutes after Van Morrison left the stage, and with the hall in darkness, Bob Dylan and his musicians made their way up the ramp at the back and on to the stage, and, as the rapturous response showed no sign of dying, kicked into *When I Paint My Masterpiece*.

The basic four-piece seemed to suit Dylan very well and he delivered a powerful performance. One of the most interesting parts was a five song section where Tony Garnier changed to double bass and John Jackson and Dylan to acoustic guitars.

Some of the Van Morrison camp obviously thought so too as Van, Richie Buckley and Dave Early watched part of this set from the side of the stage. They were treated to a rare rendition of Paul Simon's *Homeward Bound*, and another song which even the most hardened Dylan watchers were unable to put a name to. Weeks later, Dylan's latest biographer Clinton Heylin put the word round that it was a cover of John Prine's *People Putting People Down*.

They left before Dylan concluded his set with a string of songs from *Oh Mercy* and crowd-pleasers like *Highway 61 Revisited*, *I Shall Be Released*, *Like A Rolling Stone* and *I Want You*.

Bob Dylan clearly appreciated the audience as well. He looked very happy, continually strolling around the stage, lifting his hat and waving to the audience.

At the end of *I Want You*, as Dylan and the band left the stage, he grabbed his jacket and headed smartly down the ramp. The thought immediately occurred that he wouldn't be hanging around at the Palaeur tonight to chew the fat with anyone and seemed to be confirmed a couple of minutes later

when the house lights went up.

Driving round the Palacur afterwards on our way home, it seemed that the whole of Rome was caught in a frantic rush. We watched a burning car, tipped on it's side by some anarchic concert-goers, a problem thankfully not encountered (yet) in cities such as Glasgow, Newcastle or Manchester.

We enjoyed breakfast the next morning at an outdoor cafe high on one of the seven hills overlooking Rome and this was the nearest we got to sightseeing. It was straight on to the station where we just missed the 12.10 to Bologna which we knew some of the Dylan fans were hoping to catch.

We then got the 1.20 train for the three hour journey, slightly anxious that we had lost some time given that a) we didn't know where the concert was taking place and b) we didn't have tickets.

As the smooth express headed north, the skies which had been beautiful in Rome, darkened and we went through patches of rain. By the time we got into Bologna it was a steady drizzle.

It was straight into the Information Office on the square outside the station where we learned that the show was taking place in the North Park suburb, a couple of kilometres from the centre of Bologna. We were directed to the bus stop on the other side of the square where we joined a queue of people clearly heading for the concert and we knew we had arrived when the bus emptied and a glance over an adjacent wall revealed the stage, four hundred yards away in a tree-lined field.

So the rumours we heard in Rome were true. The gig was outdoors, and here we were in a country with a warm climate and the weather was straight out of the West Coast of Scotland.

Still we had more pressing matters to consider. Standing outside the venue with bags, nowhere to stay and the only rumoured accomodation back in the city centre.

We decided to walk to the hotel just up the road to ask for some advice. At the reception of the Maxim, a comfortable 3 star hotel, we were surprised to be offered rooms and found ourselves in a hotel just two minutes walk from the concert.

The other problem - that of tickets - was just as easily solved, with the ticket office outside the venue in plentiful supply. Then an innocent request by Andy at the gates saw us allowed through and shown round the backstage area to the small tented village where refreshments, books and various other items were on sale.

It meant that we were in the compound well before the main gates opened. We were able to enjoy a pizza and a beer under cover, while Dylan's band worked through their soundcheck.

The Parco Nord is, apparently, the grounds of an old monastery and the slope running round the site helped form a natural arena.

There was an elaborate press and VIP area, on a raised platform on enough scaffolding to hoist it above the lighting/sound rig in front. But the gleaming white, plastic patio seats looked most uninviting, as they were already very wet. This uncovered area could not have formed a greater contrast with the press section in Rome, where they enjoyed a lot of space and the best seats in the hall.

For a stage shared by two major acts, the Dylan (minus Bob) soundcheck dragged on interminably with John Jackson showing tremendous familiarity with one page of the guitar manual. The park authorities clearly decided they had rehearsed enough when they opened the gates at 7.30. This was our cue to move smartly to the barrier in front of the stage where we remained for the next few hours.

We witnessed the slightly bizarre scene of members of the Van Morrison band soundchecking in front of the audience. Rather than clash with the strains of Miles Davis coming out through the PA, Howard Francis opted to play his keyboards through headphones until the desk made a request for his vocals. He obliged with a few lines from Billy Joel's *Just the Way You Are*, to an enormous cheer from the already bedraggled crowd.

From somewhere behind came blasts of *Moondance* - clearly the JB's rehearsing their parts for the song which was to open the Morrison set.

Thankfully, the programme started more promptly than Rome with the JB's taking the stage at twenty minutes past eight and running through the same instrumentals as the night before. Haji Ahkba, Steve Gregory and Richie Buckley joined them on *Moondance*, before Van Morrison took the stage to a tumultuous reception and a great arrangement of the song, enhanced by the additional horns.

It was not only the audience who suffered due to the rain as it caused a series of technical problems on stage. At one point the mike Van was using went dead and the same fate befell Ronnie Johnson's guitar. The problems seemed to affect young keyboard player Howard Francis the most. He was again using Georgie Fame's Hammond, as well as his own electric organ, and when it stopped working it knocked him right off his game.

He found himself on the receiving end of one or two glares from Van as he failed to come in on cue and, on at least one occasion, had to be told to use the piano. His confidence seemed to leave him. He had shown in Rome that he could be a fine singer but tonight he just didn't seem to want to come forward.

But it wasn't just the rain which dogged Van. Handed his black Fender electric guitar by a roadie, he strummed a few chords before barking "Tune it up, Tune it up", in time with the song.

These minor hassles did not detract in any way from the quality of the set and the crowd loved it, especially Louis Prima's *Buona Sera* and *Gloria* - which they belted out happily in the rain.

During *In The Garden*, Morrison fixed his stare on one spot, way out above the crowd, for what seemed like a long time but was probably less than a minute. The impression it gave was of being so lost in the song he could have been anywhere.

Where he would be before long was back on dry land, or at least his hotel, as we waited for Dylan's '91 version of *Hard Rain*.

During his set the rain got heavier and in the last half hour it was torrential. But you do get used to the rain dripping off the end of your nose. That was nowhere near as annoying as the head-banded refugee from the Rolling Thunder Revue



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beside us who insisted in singing all the refrains in broken English, "Don't Theenk Twice, Eets Alright".

Anyhow, old Bob seemed to be rubbing things in a bit when he performed, *Shelter From The Storm*, *Watching The River Flow* and *A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall*, almost in succession. However, he did seem to have sympathy for his audience and turned in a tremendous set, with many changes from the previous night and seemed to extend quite a few of the songs.

It was fascinating to watch the extreme care that is taken over Dylan's guitars. One guy spends the entire set looking after them and they are housed, at least six of them, in an elaborate trunk almost the size of a wardrobe. As the guitar man lifted them very gingerly, he placed them carefully into the trunk and drew across a massive polythene cover. It is likely that the merest scratch could result in instant dismissal and, whatever their age, each instrument looked in showroom condition.

At the end of the show, as we trudged through mud and out the gates, it was a joy to see the lights of our hotel just ahead. When we got there we met Morrison/Dylan fans John Green and Mark Brackstone, trying to negotiate taxis to their hotel near Bologna station. We threw on dry clothes and set out for a much needed drink only to find everything closed down, even the hotel bar. Our luck was bound to run out sometime.

There was a message at the hotel from Guido Giazzi, to meet up at the exhibition centre at Novegro outside Milan the following day. He was joint organiser of the two day record fair which had attracted quite a few dealers from the UK.

We took the train to Milan with the 'fifth form' Dylan crowd and met up with them again at the Fair. We spent a pleasant (and sunny) afternoon at the outdoor cafe, having a

drink and talking music.

The Fair itself was most impressive. It was spread over two buildings, where in Britain it would probably be squeezed into one, and the wide passages and ample space between the stalls was a welcome change from the undignified scrum which characterises most of our fairs.

We stayed there until close to 7 pm. when Guido ran us straight to the Palatrussardi. As we drove into the adjacent multi-storey car park it was clear that this was to be a show on a massive scale as the crowd thronged the vast tent-like structure.

Walking into the hall, it was already clear that there was going to be a terrific atmosphere. There was a great buzz about the enormous hall, where almost every seat had already been taken, and the scene was set for a magnificent night.

When Van Morrison strolled on to the stage and poicked up his sax during *It's A Man's, Man's, Man's World* - then delivered a powerful vocal - it was clear that he was in the mood for something special.

He hardly stopped to pause until the opening bars of *Whenever God Shines His Light* which seemed to go on far too long with Van, still strumming his guitar, edging towards the side of the stage and looking back. The suspicion was there was some kind of technical problem and he was hunting out the road crew. But no one expected what came next.

Out strolled Dylan, in a long silk patterned shirt, obviously not yet changed for his set. The Milan crowd went berserk.

Dylan stood to the right of Van and a couple of paces behind and blew the kind of improvised but perfect harmonica accompaniment only he can provide. The excitement in the arena and Van's obvious pleasure at having Dylan

onstage as his guest combined in an unforgettable moment.

The song ended, the two great men embraced and Dylan prepared to leave the stage. He appeared to be asked by Van to remain for the next song, *Enlightenment*, and, conscious of the performance he was due to deliver about an hour later, he sat on Dave Early's drum podium, rising only to ask bass player Nicky Scott what key the song should be in.

Most of the audience imagined, and hoped, that Van would take the stage with Dylan. No one expected it to be the other way around. So it was a mixture of surprise and delight which greeted his appearance and remained throughout the two songs. A chant of 'Dylan, Dylan' erupted from the Milanese as he left the stage.

They were taking nothing away from Morrison and confirmed this with their reception for *Gloria*, belting out every chorus of the song. Earlier they had heard *Buona Sera* introduced, as it had been the previous two nights as 'a little bit of comedy'. When Van asked "has anybody here heard of Louis Prima?", a hand shot up and he said "O.K., I'll do it for you then."

It was undoubtedly Van's best set of the three nights. He seemed to be motivated by the prospect of Dylan's appearance on the stage and he was in inspired form.

All we had to do then was wait for Dylan.

If there is one and he was piece of equipment necessary to be in Bobby's band these days it is definitely the hat. Jackson, Garnier and Bob himself all had one. Former King Crimson drummer Ian Wallace had not and, in the heat of the Palatrussardi, that seemed quite a wise move.

There were two occasions in the set where a little shiver of excitement touched those of us familiar with Van Morrison's favourite Bob Dylan's songs. With the intros to *It's All Over Now*, *Baby Blue* and *Just Like A Woman* came the feeling that Van would come on to repay the compliment. It is probable that the earlier magic would not be re-created a second time and we heard later that Morrison had left the hall soon after his own set ended.

Other highlights were *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll* and the magnificent *One Too Many Mornings* as the quartet brought the short tour to a close. Each night had simply been a delight.

Outside the Palatrussardi we were introduced to Buscadero editor, Aldo Peron, and Guido's fellow staff writer Paolo Caru. Paolo told us how he had been phoned, right out of the blue, at home in the afternoon by Van Morrison. He asked if Paolo was coming to the show and, if he was, could he bring a tape of Bang Masters which he had yet to hear!

They were also discussing how Van always seemed to enjoy playing Milan, liked the audiences and had turned in some superb performances. They spoke particularly highly of the show at the Teatro Orfeo in January of last year.

Guido decided to take us after the show to Milan's jazz club Il Cappolino. He had gone there last year with Van and members of the band, and Richie Buckley had got up to jam with local musicians.

If we had to find the place ourselves we would never have got there. The club is situated in the canal area of the city and is named after the former last stop for the old trams which ran through Milan's impressively wide avenues. There was no sign outside and Guido led us down a quiet lane to the building, which was concealed from the main road.

Inside the owner's daughter said there had been a phone call to say that Van Morrison and Bob Dylan would be arriving together but had not yet arrived. We had not been seated with our beers for long before Richie Buckley, Haji Ahkba and Nicky Scott arrived with other members of the crew.

Richie knew Guido and joined us at the table. Guido asked him about the jazz album he was said to have recorded last year and he answered that it was just a collection of standards and he would rather do a record of his own tunes. He did say that there had been a good video recording of the session and indicated that Guido could see it through a mutual friend.

He told us how he had been in the club the previous month when he had played in Milan with Tanita Tikaram. He also said he had not played any jazz for ages and was visibly itching to get on the stage. He also kindly dropped the hint to us about the Edinburgh show in a couple of months.

Then, as soon as he could, he was up on the stage with Haji Ahkba and jamming with the house band. The commitment Richie was putting into his playing was extraordinary. He never hangs back in his shows with Van but here he was just enjoying playing the music he loves and he looked as though he could have burst a blood vessel he was blowing so hard.

It would have been tempting to stay, but it was already after two and we had to be up at seven for our morning flight from Malpensa, while Guido had to be back on duty at the record fair. So as we left with Richie Buckley still on stage, and wondering if Morrison and Dylan might show up later, we were agreed that this had been a memorable trip.



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Dream ticket: the same style of ticket was used for all three Italian shows in June

I Read It In A Book

I came across an interesting looking book on popular sixties pop combo The Beatles called *Tell Me Why*; I haven't had time to read it yet but thought that you might like to peruse the Dylan references. (The book is written by Tim Riley and published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1988.)

Pages 141-142: You've Got to Hide Your Love Away doesn't owe as much to Dylan as some would like to think; it has more of Dylan's influence than his actual style. It's hard to imagine the master of deceit singing so direct a sentiment with such clear, distilled imagery. Although Lennon's delivery here is detached and somewhat restrained, it's still more personally revealing than most of the masks Dylan wears. Dylan is among the great singers of his generation, but his skill lies more in twisting meanings and snarling ironies; he sings with an ear for hidden inferences and innuendos. Although a lot of Dylan songs address the audience directly –explaining feelings, holding opinions, pronouncing injustices –its not clear how many songs are meant in the first person. Who is the real Bob Dylan: the drifter in *Tangled Up In Blue*, the prayerful "tenant" in *Dear Landlord*? Lennon is never so detached from his subject. *How could she say to me! Love will find a way?* is the kind of sardonic line Dylan might write, but Lennon is singing more to himself than to the "clowns" he sees around him. There are more boundaries between Dylan the performer and his audience. Although Lennon is speaking to the world at large, what comes across is a sense of sober introspection, not a lesson on human relationships.

Page 154: But in 1965 the pop world underwent a major *rock 'n' roll* explosion. Dylan's electric set at the Newport Folk Festival earlier in the year, and his two seminal rock albums *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Highway 61 Revisited*, effectively derailed the purist folk craze. His best rock tour de force, *Like A Rolling Stone*, capped a summer that had started with the Byrds' elegiac cover of Dylan's *Mr. Tambourine Man* and the seething disaffection of the Stones' *Satisfaction*...

Page 155: Dylan and the Stones inspire rather than influence their sound. The untold story of sixties rock is how these artists admired each other without ever stooping to imitation –the narrow barriers of the archetypical rock-'n'-roll formula sound vastly different in the hands of these central figures. The improvised narrative of Bob Dylan's *Talkin' World War III Blues* expands into the verbal shenanigans of *Tombstone Blues* the same way his poetic vengeance in *I Don't Believe You (She Acts Like We Never Have Met)* (first acoustic, then electrified with the Band) is heir to the embittered *Don't Think Twice, It's All Right*.

Page 159: Dylan's answer to this song [*Norwegian Wood*], *4th Time Around*, is either a highly derivative imitation or an overwrought self-parody.

Page 256: ROCK 'N' ROLL has always been a revolutionary force. It changed the way youth culture perceived itself on a wide range of issues: sexuality, freedom, self-worth, individuality. By the mid-sixties radicals began to see new political possibilities in the form. And yet for all the rhetoric in the underground papers, there are surprisingly few good political rock songs from the sixties. Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's *Ohio* (1970), directed at the Kent State killings is the most affecting (*Tin soldiers and Nixon's coming...*). Dylan got more mileage by singing: *Don't follow leaders/Watch the parking meters* with an electric guitar in *Subterranean Homesick Blues* (1965) than he did acoustically with *Only A Pawn In Their Game* (1964). As Ariel Swartley puts it in her article, *A Life In The Balance* (*Boston Phoenix*, October 28, 1986), "What Dylan offered listeners was the subversive delight of individual interpretation along with the heady solidarity of consensus."

Pages 280-281: Dylan's bitterest songs deliberately keep their subjects vague. Some say *Positively 4th Street* is about the folkies who stiffly opposed his shift to rock: *Like A Rolling Stone* snarls

at innocence itself. Sexy Sadie is a thinly-veiled kiss-off to the Maharishi, Lennon's bitter hate letter to the Indian meditation master.....Like Dylan's, Lennon's exaggerations reflect back on himself as much as his subject.

Page 338-339: When it lost the Beatles, pop lost its hub. They symbolised the ultimate integration –outrageous yet accessible, varied yet whole –and their breakup made the period that followed sound irrevocably splintered. The best Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan records of the seventies ignored trends more than they set new standards: *Exile On Main Street* and *Blood On The Tracks* (1974) are grounded in the experience of the sixties, enigmas to the pop climate they greeted (a dilemma Dylan wrestles with in *Idiot Wind*). By 1978 with the Stones' disco pander *Miss You* and Dylan's conversion to Christianity (*Slow Train Coming*[1979]), they began to sound like Presleyian parodies of themselves, especially compared to the ethic of reinvention practiced by punk and new wave ascendants –the Ramones, the Talking Heads, Elvis Costello, the Sex Pistols, the Clash.....The fact that Dylan's heir apparent, Elvis Costello, didn't win over a deserved large audience says more about the fickle masses than about his formidable songwriting invective.

Fairly interesting stuff, I thought, though a quote from Greil Marcus, (presumably correct in Riley's opinion), stating that "Girl is a good deal more sophisticated than Just Like A Woman" (page 165) left a sour taste.

Robbie Robertson: Vox interview October 1991 issue.

One night Bob Dylan checked out Robbie's Band and hauled them out on his watershed 1966 world tour. It was rock'n'roll epiphany, Dylan alienating the folk fans by playing with a rock band. *Everybody around told us it wasn't working, and we would tape the shows and listen to them at night – just Bob and the guys in the band – and say "I'm sorry, but this isn't that bad,"* recalls Robertson with a smoky laugh.

When I read other people's lyrics on their sleeves, I think they look stupid. If I read the lyrics of some of my favourite songs, they don't mean shit to me. But if I hear When A Man Loves A Woman, it is so powerful and emotional. All I want out of any of these songs is the right emotion. I don't give a shit what the lyrics are. Dylan rambled on way too much for my liking. I remember years ago saying to him: "listen to When A Man Loves A Woman; I like this more than any of the songs we're playing. This is emotional to me; our songs are clever. I don't care for clever. Let's try and get somewhere that has an emotional thing."

Many mourn the loss of Robbie Robertson the guitarist, one of the few idolised in the '60s who exercised exemplary restraint. *On this record I'm probably playing more guitar than I have since I was taking all those solos with Bob Dylan in those early days. But to me, if I don't have an emotional excuse, to ramble on and jam is a real bore. I did the screaming guitar thing with Ronnie Hawkins as a 16-year old kid getting his rocks off on the guitar; and then with Bob Dylan playing many, too many, solos in my estimation. But at the time he enjoyed it because having this guy come in wailing between the verses was like having a new toy to him.*

John Lee Hooker: Vox interview October 1991 issue.

He lived in New York for a spell where he befriended such rising stars as Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Hooker was the avuncular centre of a talented circle. *Those were the days, he says, breaking into a broad grin. Coffee houses everywhere. I loved sittin' down there playin' by myself. Before Bob Dylan got famous, he used to hang around with us. I was there at the Broadway Central Hotel and Bob would stay with me every night. We got to be really good friends, me and Bob. He'd come and see me play down at Gerde's Folk City. One night I got him on the stage. Right after that he became famous. Those days are over, you know they ain't comin' back, but every time me and Bob get together, we start dreamin' and talkin' about the past. It's fun.*

The London Bob Dylan Club

Apologies to those for whom the following will have no interest but **Homer** feels he must respond to an astonishing attack on him contained in the last letter (reproduced below) from Debbie Sims to her pupils! "Astonishing" not because the facts are inaccurate: *Isis* and *The Telegraph* did advertise the last meetings and **Homer, the slut** did not. "Astonishing" because **Homer, the slut** received details of the advert over two weeks past the deadline and only two days before the September issue was posted out. (Even then a half page had been reserved in case it could be photocopied straight in, alas, a scrawled fax was all that arrived.)

You may have guessed that **Homer** was a little peeved, and, seeking revenge, decided to give an equally friendly dig at both the fact that attendees are expected to be prepared to talk - with illustrative material where possible - on a given subject (I kid you not) and, in particular, highlight some of the topics: **Bob Dylan's Women** and **Where Does Dylan Go From Here?**: prompting the thoughts: "please bring a copy of *Hello!* and the latest tour guide respectively". However this rather unchristian response was spiked by the entry *Oh Mercy, A cry for help?* which is beyond sarcasm. Finally I direct your attention to the letter's conclusion which is beyond belief - far less sarcasm. You would presume, would you not, that anyone attending a Dylan club would have seen *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* one of the many times it has been shown in this country (for goodness sake, I used to meet the same people at various locations as we crisscrossed the country watching it). If they hadn't you would surely take it as read that they had watched and videoed both versions which have already been shown on TV! If we stretch the imagination far enough to accept that there is somebody out there who is interested enough in Dylan to go to the club and yet has never seen the film *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, surely that person intended to watch the film anyway?

OK, Debbie I'm only kidding. The club is a great idea - what gave you the idea anyway? - and it is heartening to see it grow so quickly. Anyone who is going should keep their eyes and ears open for possible change of locations as we've been told that there is a pub in Mayfair (*The Horse and Groom?*) that has a notice in the front door window claiming to be a Bob Dylan fan pub. Unfortunately we haven't found out any more about this - any Mayfair drinkers able to help?

London Bob Dylan Club

Happy New Year and Hello to everyone who has written to me following my ads in *Isis* and the *Telegraph*, (see Andy, real Dylan fan mags actually print what their subscribers send them!). I hope we can meet up soon. For those of you who have attempted it the problems of trying to hold club meetings in the Princess Louise are obvious... so I've decided to follow the example of the man himself and take the club on tour!! The programme for the next six meetings is as follows.

Dylan's contribution to *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*
Friday 24 January 1992, Cittie of York, 22 High Holborn, WC1

Bob Dylan's Women
Saturday 22 February 1992, Glassblower, 42 Glasshouse Street, W1

John Wesley Harding
Sunday 29 March 1992, Lamb, 94 Lamb's Conduit Street, WC1

Dylan's Influence on Other Artists
Friday 24 January 1992, Olde Cheshire Cheese, Wine Office Court; off 145 Fleet Street, EC4

Oh Mercy! A cry for help?"
Saturday 23 May 1992, Orange Brewery, 37 Pimlico Road, SW1

Where does Dylan go from here?"
Sunday 28th June 1992, Lamb & Flag, 33 Rose Street, WC2

Once again recommendations for large, quiet, friendly, easily accessible pubs in central London, suggestions for venues with audio and video facilities and invitations to houses would be very welcome. Please let me know which venues & days of the week are most convenient for you, and which aspects of Dylan you most want to discuss.

Finally, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* is on BBC2 next Saturday at 10.55pm, with a programme about Sam Peckinpah at 9.05pm, as this is the theme of our next meeting, I hope you'll be able to watch or video it.

Deborah Sims
31 Panmure Road, Sydenham, London, SE26 6NB
091 699 3284 (Weekends) 0992 31921 x 2515 (Mon - Fri)

Erratum

However, when **Homer, the slut** does err, he likes to admit it - well, it is kind of difficult not to when you make the same mistake twice in the same section! Both Mark Carter's **Angelina** and I.G. Roberts's **Let Me Die In My Footsteps** pieces were printed in incomplete versions in Issue Four. So here are the missing bits, with abject apologies to Mark and Ian:

Angelina

First of all Mark's, because it read not too badly as it stood, though those sharp eyed amongst you may have noticed that, on page 30 of **The Box Set Part II**, a paragraph "ended" with "Men who are inadequate, with no soul and no faith trying to storm or buy their way into heaven" [No punctuation] The next paragraph began "If you open your Bible..." In between those should have been the following:

...without paying their dues, without casting aside all their loyalty and their pride and humbling themselves before a greater being. For it will be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Elsewhere, visions of the anti-Christ seem to be scattered through-out the song: "His eyes were two slits that would make any snake proud". But sometimes Satan will come as a man of peace, so in the next line we get; "with a face that any painter would paint as he walked through the crowd." Well, the anti-Christ could be amongst us right now, in our midst, but we can't see him. Or don't want to. He'll have his day, though, have his time of power as the bible foretells, but will be defeated again. "Tell me, tall man, where would you like to be overthrown, in Jerusalem or Argentina" Isn't it all supposed to end somewhere in the Middle East? The final battle. Armageddon. Followed by Christ returning to set up His throne.

If the tall man; or the anti-Christ, or whatever you want to call the beast with the angelic face and the serpent eyes, worships a large-breasted god with the head of a hyena, then this conjures up pictures of those ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses that they were fond of immortalising in huge golden statues. But the Egyptians didn't worship Satan, did they? They worshipped the Sun and the Moon and Isis (not the magazine) and Osiris, but not Satan. But wasn't the anti-Christ born of a jackal or something? I mean, can we split just a few hairs and say that a jackal and a hyena look similar, and that "hyena" rhymes better with "Angelina"? Thank you for humouring me.

Let Me Die In My Footsteps

Ian's article was chopped off about half way through, here is how it should have proceeded (**The Box Set Part II** pages 15/16):

Let Me Die In My Footsteps though, is a very early song, a very folky song, and like **Paths Of Victory** (another of his rejected anthems from the pre-electric period salvaged in this treasure chest of a box set) a very Guthrie song. And yet a unique voice is emerging here. Folky it may be, Dylan it is for sure. The aphoristic quality of lines like these would soon become a trademark:-

*There's bin rumours of war 'n' wars that've bin
The meanin' of life has bin lost in the wind
Some people're thinkin' that the end is close by
'Stead of learnin' to live they're learnin' to die*

In the wind, indeed. And there, too, is that abiding dual-obsession with death and dignity. **Let Me Die In My Footsteps** however, is a life-affirming song and I hear in it echoes of another diamond-reject of Dylan's from roughly the same period: the beautiful **Lay Down Your Weary Tune**.

Let Me Die In My Footsteps doesn't have the strength of strings of the chordally richer *Tune*, but both songs have melodies which lure us in, and choruses which gently close the door behind us. If **Lay Down Your Weary Tune** is an anthem then it is in praise of a vividly imaged Nature which Dylan offers himself up to as if he were a kind of human Aeolian harp. **Let Me Die In My Footsteps** is a quieter, more muted affair. Dylan's vocal delivery was still at this point quite clipped and Guthriesque although it would rapidly become more expansive from *Freewheelin'* onwards. But, lyrically, notice how **Let Me Die In My Footsteps** opens out in its last two verses which edge the song into the more pastoral, Romantic world we find in **Lay Down Your Weary Tune**.

If we check in *Lyrics 1962-85* (p21) we can see that Dylan wisely omitted from his performed version an inferior fifth verse in the original song and one wishes that his editing was always this effective. The final verse of **Let Me Die In My Footsteps**, incidentally, is a good example of Dylan's lifelong fascination with place-names, and it also resembles the crescendo reached at the end of his poem **Last Thoughts On Woody Guthrie** (*Rare & Unreleased*, track 22).

If my discussion of **Let Me Die In My Footsteps** in relation to other 'anthems' has tended to diminish it by comparison, then let me quickly add that this was not my intention: it is a measure of Dylan's greatness that there are so many varied and valid frames of reference, is it not?

Robbie Robertson: Radio One 4/1/92 & 11/1/92.

I am not sure if this was an interview or a retrospective or what. I do know that the first week included **Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues** from the '66 tour and Robbie talking about the tour. Jailhouse John gets credit for hearing this but loses lots for not liking said track's vocal - not enough hiccups in it I suppose - and not taping it.

Dinosaurs

Also to Jailhouse John's credit is alerting me to the programme *Dinosaurs*, which will hopefully go on national network soon (currently LWT Sundays at 14:50). It is a kind of unholy mixture of *The Flintstones* and the *Muppets* with the main characters all being dinosaurs and a script written by some of Dr Leary's less successful 60s patients. It is wonderful. What is all of this doing in a Dylan magazine? Well, in the first episode of series 2, the adolescent Robbie dropped out of the carnivore race, tuned into radical politics of individualism and turned onto broccoli. This led him to a radical hangout where a dinosaur in a very 1975 Dylanesque hat entertained the crowd of dropouts with **Has Anybody Seen My Good Friend Bambi's Mother?** [obviously not since the straights had eaten her], **This land Is your Land** and, as authority clamped down, led the spontaneous chants of **(All We Are Saying Is) Give Peas A Chance**. All of this delivered in a Melbourne 66-ish voice and with excellent harmonica breaks. He almost stole the show from the main dinosaur family's baby.

Dramatis Personae:

The following is for the benefit of new or new-ish readers. Since I want parts of Homer, the slut to remain personalzine in approach - primarily in Bits & Bobs - it means I will often refer to people mentioned in previous issues. However the last thing I want is for Homer, the slut to appear clique-ish so I thought these short introductions might help with this particular issue.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Olive | My elder sister, eulogizes the '60s and has just achieved a first in sociology. Yep, she's an old hippy but at least it means I don't have to buy the Guardian. |
| Alex | Even older, married to Olive. The best looking Scottish weatherman with a beard on ITN. Claims to be a Partick Thistle Nil fan but then so do most TV personalities from Glasgow. |
| Stuart | Batsford of that ilk; and, according to January's issue of VOX: "highly knowledgeable." All I can say is that they were not referring to any sense of punctuality, this man has "no sense of time." [A West Brom fan, therefore permanently rooted in the Jeff Astle era] |
| Paul Wright | Not only "no sense of time" but no sense of.....["Enough! He's a very nice chap, really" cry all. "But he doesn't even like football!" "Enough!"] |
| Jailhouse John | My boss, an ex-teddy boy and record producer. Obsessed with Buddy Holly. A contradictory man; he loves country and rock music but hates Dylan's voice. Has a couple of good points, though, i.e. he supports Liverpool and is currently in Thailand. |

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16	Clockwise from top left: Today NME NME TV Quick What's On TV	N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A	15/6/91 29/6/91 27/4/91 15/6/91 15/6/91
17	Select Q	William Shaw John Bauldie	Jan 92 Feb 92
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20	Clockwise from top: LA Times Q NME VOX	Mat Snow (Q&A) US News Postcards From Hell	18/11/91 Sep 91 5/10/91 Feb 92
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Dylan: Can he be 50?



Bob Dylan (left) in 1966. The rock legend (right) performed at the 33rd Grammy Awards in New York in February. On Friday, Dylan will be 50.

By Ron Sirok
Associated Press

"Where have you been my blue-eyed son?
"Where have you been my darling young one?"

◆◆◆

For his own generation and perhaps for others, Bob Dylan always has been a milepost in the passing of time. A standard of concern and conceit, of brilliance and belligerence, of personal and poetic originality.

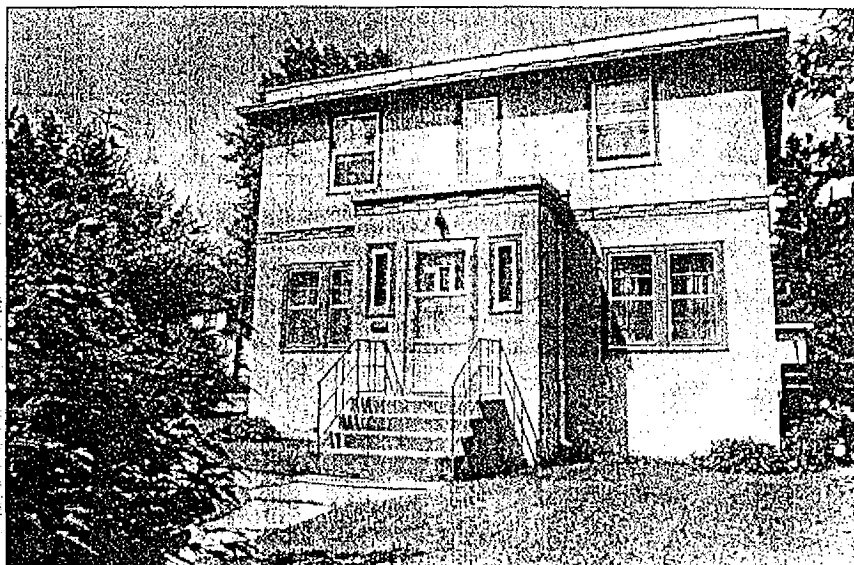
"Blowing in the Wind" . . . "Mr. Tambourine Man" . . . Going electric . . . The motorcycle crash . . . "Nashville Skyline" (and where DID that voice come from?) . . . "Blood on the Tracks." Born again. Lost again. Born again, again.

Like a first kiss or last look at a childhood home, his songs provoke the kinds of memories that remind us exactly where we were and what was going on in our lives when Dylan did whatever it was he was doing.

It was 30 years ago that Dylan captured the New York City folk scene and kept it in his thrall for decades. This Friday, it will be 50 years since he was born in Duluth as Robert Allen Zimmerman.

Not entirely as coincidence, perhaps, a remarkable three-volume collection of outtakes, rehearsal cuts, demos and concert recordings were released last month by Columbia, entitled "The Bootleg Series."

Duluth News-Tribune
Sunday, May 19, 1991



Dylan's childhood Northland homes: 519 N. Third Ave. E. in Duluth, left, and 2425 E. Seventh St. in Hibbing.

The boxed set is a reminder of how truly staggering Dylan's work has been, and how astonishing that these 58 cuts would go unpublished for as long as they did. Everything in the set is worth listening to. Even the bad cuts provide valuable insight into the evolution and choices of a major artist.

"I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it."

He was born in Duluth but was raised in Hibbing, the son of a Jewish hardware merchant in a town of 17,000 mostly Catholic miners. He started playing the piano at age 8 and the guitar and harmonica at about 10. His heroes were Hank Williams and James Dean, Lead-belly and Little Richard.

And, of course, Woody Guthrie. He migrated to New York in part to visit a dying and hospitalized Guthrie.

Dylan is remembered by childhood friends as a loner who didn't seem to mind that almost no one seemed to understand, or like, his music.

Out of it all came the music of America — blues and country and folk — filtered through a blue-

eyed, skinny college dropout determined to be noticed.

And noticed he was. He hit New York City for the first time in January 1961, and right away, everyone saw there was something different about him. He was unique. He hadn't yet emerged as a writer (he wasn't quite 20) but the voice that seemed to search for notes, the pounding guitar, the walling harmonica and uncanny sense of timing and phrasing produced a package perfect for the words he was slinging.

That later became even more true when he was slinging his own words. The desperate, on-the-edge sound was perfect for the scolding condemnations of injustice or the nightmarish visions of insanity and destruction he put into words.

"I don't write about things," he said. "I write from inside of something, and I sing and play the same way. It's never about that 'something,' hoping to touch it. It's rather from the inside of it reaching out."

Dylan was a performance artist before entertainment hybrids re-invented the word. The whole package created a tension that touched unnamed fears in his listeners. Something was happening, and we didn't know what it was, but

whatever it was, this man Dylan seemed to be feeling it also, and he was able to articulate it.

America was on the verge of tumbling madly into something that would later be known as The '60s. Dylan was a step or two ahead of everyone, dragging as many as he could with him.

"I heard the song of a poet who died in the gutter."

In 1961, after rave reviews on the New York coffee house circuit, Dylan signed a three-year deal with Witmark & Sons to publish his songs. It might have been the most creative period for any writer in American music. In three years, Dylan wrote 237 songs for Witmark.

It was the period in which he wrote "Blowin' in the Wind," "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall," "Masters of War," "With God on Our Side," "It Ain't Me Babe," "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right," "Only a Pawn in Their Game" and "Mr. Tambourine Man."

Says Dylan: "When I'm slakin' my songs, it never occurs to me that I wrote them."

"If I didn't have a song like 'Masters of War,' I'd find a song like 'Masters of War' to sing. Same

thing with 'Times They Are A-Changin'.' If I didn't have a song like that, I'd go out and look around, and I'd search around until I found one like that, you know?"

It was a shocking, stunning burst of creativity by an artist in his early 20s that produced what would be Dylan's biggest burden for the rest of his career: Everything he would ever do again would be compared to that remarkable time.

"The Bootleg Series" documents this period, and much, much more. It takes us on a trip not just through recent history but through the life of one of the most powerful interpreters of that history.

All of the Dylan eras are represented in the set: The acoustic folk-protest of the first five albums; the surrealistic and shockingly electric albums "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Blonde on Blonde"; the playful, post-motorcycle mellow of the late '60s and early '70s; the regained passion of "Blood on the Tracks" and "Desire"; and finally, the Born Again and post-Born Again period with "Saved" and "Slow Train Coming."

The earliest cuts in this collection come from late 1961, the most

recent from 1989.

And while Dylan's style and his specific concerns have changed many times, his substance has remained the same.

Throughout "The Bootleg Series" we hear the anger that is as much Dylan as anything — anger at a lover, at God, at the powers that be, at who knows. Sometimes just a shouting anger such as in "Idiot Wind"; "You hurt the ones that I love best, cover up the truth with lies"; or in "Let Me Die in My Footstep": "There's always been people that have to cause fear."

But mixed in with the anger is humor and, occasionally, hope. There is the determination of the Civil Rights Movement and the fear of a child growing up in the shadow of the atomic bomb, as he sings in "Masters of War." And yet Dylan, who is divorced, has five children.

And always there is a spirituality, a belief that somehow all of the suffering he saw — and all of the pain he felt — make sense.

The collection also reinforces the notion that Dylan's overtly religious art is his least interesting. It's obvious, almost forced. But the collection also shows that Dylan's best art is very religious.

Hibbing Daily Tribune
Minnesota U.S.A.
May 24, 1991

Bobby Dylan 50 years old today

Protest songwriter-prophet enigma in home town

By LEE BLOOMQUIST

Perhaps the city fathers should have proclaimed a special day in his honor.

Or at the very least, named a street after him.

The relationship between songwriting legend Bob Dylan and the city he grew up in has proven to be as unpredictable as Dylan himself.

Bob Dylan, A.K.A. Robert Allen Zimmerman, was born May 24, 1941, in Duluth. He was reared in Hibbing where he graduated from high school in 1959. He went to college for a time at the University of Minnesota main campus where he received a D-plus in music appreciation.

Today is his 50th birthday.

Along the way he became known as something of a rebel, not caring what others thought of him or of his musical pursuits.

He hit New York in January 1961, at age 20 where he signed a three-year publishing contract with Witmark & Sons.

Dylan went on to write such songs as "Blowin' in the Wind," later performed by Peter, Paul and Mary, "Mr. Tambourine Man," and "My Back Pages," made famous by The Byrds, "It Ain't Me Babe," popularized by Sonny and Cher, and "Quinn the Eskimo," performed by Manfred Mann.

His own hits included "Like a Rolling Stone," "Positively 4th Street," "Just Like a Woman," "Highway 61 Revisited," "The Times They Are A-Changin'," "I Want You," "Lay Lady Lay," "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," and others.

In a span of three years, beginning in 1961, he wrote 237 songs.

While his music evolved, a seemingly ambivalent attitude by Dylan toward his childhood hometown, whether imagined or not by the townspeople, has lingered over the years.

In one of his works, "My Life in a Stolen Moment," Dylan wrote of his hometown: "Hibbing's a good ol' town

I ran away from it when I was 10, 12, 13, 15, 15½, 17, an' 18

I been caught 'an brought back all but once."

"He doesn't like Hibbing for one reason or another," said Tim Hannan, an employee of Erickson's Music, formerly Crippa's Music, the store where a young Dylan, at about 10 years of age, was said to have bought his first guitar. "We get a lot of calls from tourists looking for Dylan memorabilia. We wanted to sell some tee-shirts or even some pencils (endorsed by Dylan) last year, but he wouldn't go along with it.

Despite what some people might think, Jimmy's Bar in Hibbing isn't named after Bobby Zimmerman. Yet a commemorative poster of Dylan receiving his Lifetime Achievement Award at the May 24 Grammy Awards ceremony hangs on the bar wall. Several of his recordings are in the bar's jukebox.

"He has led kind of a mysterious personal life," Jimmy's manager Linda Stroback said. "And I think it's kind of nice that Hibbing has done that as well. We try to look at him as being very important, but Hibbing has not lost its perspective. The local townspeople haven't gotten too crazy and have downplayed him instead of hyping it up."

Dylan's cousin, Gary Zimmerman, formerly of Hibbing, currently living in Grand Rapids, said Dylan still visits his hometown. Dylan's last trip to Hibbing was in September 1990.

"He usually comes up about twice a year," Zimmerman said. "He just does it quietly — he doesn't like to publicize it."

Zimmerman, eight years younger than Dylan, recalls his cousin as being unique.

"I wouldn't say he was a rebel," Zimmerman said. "He was a thinker before his time. When kids were running around thinking about poodle skirts he was thinking about other things."

Zimmy's Bar has taken advantage of Dylan's fame — along with the name of another famous Hibbingite, former New York Yankee star Roger Maris, who was born in Hibbing.

For about a week, Zimmy's has been selling tee-shirts featuring artists' renditions of Dylan and Maris — on the same shirt.

Tourists passing through Hibbing still flock to see the house at 2524

Seventh Ave. E. where Dylan grew up.

"There's quite a cult following that comes up to Hibbing to see the house," Hibbing Mayor Jim Collins said. "I didn't know him, but I guess he was a little different and not too well received. I heard that people treated him shabbily and I guess I can understand why he doesn't come home too often."

In recent days Collins has received a number of cards from around the country wishing Dylan a happy birthday.

"The cards say 'to Bobby on his 50th birthday,'" Collins said. "Evidently people think that he celebrates his birthday here. I heard he comes up here in a big motorhome once in a while."

Dylan's 50th birthday will be celebrated at Ironworld USA in Chisholm Saturday through Monday with musical performances by several folk singers, including Paul Metsa of Minneapolis.

"He is one of the greatest wordsmiths of this century," Metsa, formerly of Virginia, who met Dylan several years ago in Minneapolis and gave Dylan one of his demo tapes, said. "I think he's just so busy that he doesn't get much of a chance to get back — it's more just a function of his schedule than anything."

Doug Ellis of Eveleth, a lifetime resident of the Iron Range and a Dylan fan for more than 20 years, will also perform at Ironworld this weekend with his Hole-in-The-Wall Gang band.

"It's kind of funny that everybody's fighting over him," Ellis said. "Duluth wants him — Hibbing wants him — and he's really not from either. I think of him as being from New York rather than from here."

In one of Dylan's 11 Outlined Epitaphs, Dylan seems to settle the question of where his feelings lie.

"The town I was born in holds no memories

but for the hookin' foghorns
the rainy mist
I have carried no feelings

up past Lake Superior hills
the town I grew up in is the one
that has left me with my legacy

visions
it was not a rich town

It was not a poor town
It was a dyin' town
(it was a dyin' town)

Metsa, along with the Ellis band, will perform some of Dylan's most famous songs along with their own material Saturday, Sunday and Monday in the Ironworld amphitheater. Dave Verzaal, a 21-year-old from Hibbing who impersonates Dylan, will perform Monday.

Still, the mystery of Bob Dylan, his music, and his feelings about his hometown, will likely remain as legendary as Dylan himself.

"Maybe they should have named an avenue after him," Hannan said. "Greyhound Avenue (leading to old north Hibbing) could be Dylan Avenue."

"I have my own feelings (about what Dylan thinks of Hibbing)," Zimmerman said. "But I guess you'd have to ask him."

Yet even in absence, Dylan's presence is still felt.

As the only Zimmerman in Hibbing, tourists have had Gary Zimmerman pose for pictures with them.

"I think I'm up on some people's mantles," Zimmerman said.

Meanwhile, Dylan's writings hold as much meaning today as they did 30 years ago.

"I think his biggest contribution is that my kids are still reading some of his things (his poetry) in their English class," Zimmerman said.

So will Bobby Zimmerman, misunderstood, misread, and misinterpreted as a Hibbing teenager, remain a mystery to the people of his hometown?

The answer my friend, is
blowin' in the wind.

BOB DYLAN'S BACK PAGES

The music industry thrives on anniversaries. Just witness the recent 'celebrations' surrounding the passing of Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley, to name but three. It's the record label's chance to capitalise upon an artist's back catalogue. After all, there's a new generation to exploit, and an older, contemporary generation eager to replace their old worn-out vinyl copies with the latest silver beer-mats.

So it's strange that BOB DYLAN's 50th birthday has not received quite the same reverential treatment that has befallen other artists.

Certainly authors have not been slow to realise an opportunity, and consequently the bookshelves have been straining under the collective weight of numerous biographies, discographies and general dissections of his work. Recommended reading includes "Dylan - Behind The Shades" by Clinton Heylin, "Bob Dylan" by Anthony Scaduto, "The Ghost Of Electricity" by John Bauldie and "What Happened" by Paul Williams.

Back in November 1985, CBS issued a 5 - LP or 3 - CD retrospective of Dylan's career entitled "Biograph". At that time his career was considered to be in a commercial decline. "Biograph" included important unissued songs, plus tired resurrections of 'classics' and the odd smattering of live highlights from his 1966, 1975 and 1981 tours. It became only the second such boxed-set to reach the US Top 50 charts. This astonishing achievement was noted by the record company and seemingly forgotten. Needless to say, it took the fervent devotion of the bootleggers to document his definitive works. Thanks to them we can now savour many lost archival delights.

Like a sprung cassette Dylan's "Basement Tapes" spool forth uncontrollably, every so often spilling newly uncovered material from the carousing demos he recorded with The Band at their Big Pink home in late summer '67. Despite merciless pirating and a belated official collection, resourceful bootleggers have amassed enough unheard stuff to fill two new double record sets. "The Basement Tapes Volumes One & Two" were released under the moniker Blind Boy Grunt & The Hawks. Quite a coup, considering nary a whisper has hinted at the existence of many of their 43

songs, instrumentals and trial runs (though one of The Band's two sides does confirm the bizarre legend of their session with Tiny Tim!)

Recorded in the missing year between "Blonde On Blonde" and the reflective "John Wesley Harding", the puzzle of these new "Basement Tapes" is how little they relate to the LP's bookending them. Casually worked out and performed in the company of the one Band close enough to anticipate the singer's every quaver and twist, the "Tapes" are by turns joyous, absurd, bawdy, non-sensical, plain daft and profoundly affecting.

They feature Dylan at his most open. Happy to let roar of working-man America rush through him, he nevertheless gamely holds his own - jostling songs with rude bar-room banter and loudly invoking old acquaintances. Unsurprisingly, most of the best got on to the official "Basement Tapes" set, but these companion bootlegs are no less enjoyable. Indeed, it's revealing to hear what Dylan chose to leave off the CBS release.

Never let it be said that Dylan's voice is not flexible. Wayward and wavering though it has to be to negotiate the wide variety of genres and moods here, there is no more affecting sound than Dylan's voice stretched taught across The Band's hoarse, desolating harmonies. At times they sing like men possessed... These are the sort of great, raw moments people take fright at exposing on official

releases, fearing they'll never be able to recapture them and it's exactly the 'once and once only' quality of the Dylan bootleg that renews obsessions otherwise exhausted by the sadly routine events of recent Dylan records.

The failure of "Biograph" to satisfy the fan's hunger for more material was further emphasised by the appearance of "Ten of Swords", a 10 - LP bootleg boxed-set. Considered by many to be vastly superior to all official releases, it became the yardstick by which to gauge any Dylan anthology sets. Its release shamed/prompted CBS to compile yet another archival boxed-set. Dylan gave the label carte-blanche to release anything from his archive and thus May this year saw the arrival of the laudable "The Bootleg Series Volumes 1 - 3". This magnificent jamboree-bag of delights contains both rare and unreleased material covering the 30 years of his recording career. His primitive, instant approach to recording is in evidence on this 3 - CD or 5 - LP collection, and it's that very dynamic style which proves to be his greatest asset. Included are publishing demos, out-takes, alternative versions, rehearsals and live performances. The 58 tracks are all previously unreleased, and all formats come with a 72 - page track by track information booklet written by John Bauldie... I eagerly await further items in this series.

Geoff Wall



This evocative photograph of Bob Dylan has been reproduced for Folk on Tap by kind permission of Sony.

THE ESSENCE

The most influential and enigmatic pop icon of his generation, Bob Dylan reveals rock's arbiter of attitude. On the occasion of his 50th birthday, SCOTT CORN explains why. • A shiny suit, a bit of lipstick, and a big pompadour hairdo—that's the essence of Little Richard. Blue denim, an acoustic guitar, and the open doors of a boxcar—that's the essence of Woody Guthrie. Bob Dylan's is a combination of the two. He gave folk songs a rock'n'roll attitude and rock songs a folk-music point of view. His singing style is influenced by Jack Kerouac and Larry Furlinghetti reading poetry, but his lyrics are more French Symbolist. Rimbaud with a harmonica—that's the essence of Dylan. • In 1965, Bob Dylan showed up at the prestigious Newport Folk Festival in a black leather jacket with a Fender electric guitar. This was during the last days of folk music and Dylan was folk music's champion. When he and his band broke into an ear-splitting, electrified "Maggie's Farm," then "Like a Rolling Stone" and "It Takes a Train to Cry," the audience felt betrayed. There was nearly a riot. After a long, awkward pause, Dylan ended his set with "It's All Over Now,

OF

DYLAN

Baby Blue." The audience had forgotten, or never knew, that Dylan had a rock band in high school long before he was a folk singer. They forgot that *Bringing It All Back Home* had just come out and was already a giant hit. They forgot that back home in Hibbing, Minnesota, two uncles, both licensed electricians, and his father owned a store called Micka Electric where they sold lamps, clocks, radios, and anything electrical.

DYLAN STARTED OUT WEARING BATMAN AND ROBIN-type sunglasses and would like to end up wearing a motorcycle helmet with a black plastic visor; that way no one can recognize the back of his head. But there's one pair of steel-rims that he's worn throughout the years, not so much because they're cool, but because he's nearsighted and the glasses are prescription.

DYLAN'S DEFINITION OF COOL IS MILES DAVIS TAKING a solo in a small club, turning his back on the audience, putting down his horn, walking off the stage while the band continues on, then coming back and playing a few more notes at the end. Dylan tried doing that at a couple of his shows but the audience didn't think he was cool. They thought he was sick.

DYLAN MET MARIANNE FAITHFULL AT THE SAVOY Hotel while touring England in 1965. Marianne thought Dylan was God and followed him around for two weeks, paying her own way and staying in her own hotel room. This was the tour on which *Don't Look Back* was filmed. According to Marianne, Dylan cut her part out of the film because she wouldn't sleep with him. She wasn't sure though if Dylan actually wanted to sleep with her or felt he had to make a play for her, but when the payoff came one night in her hotel room, she gasped and said, "I can't possibly. I'm getting married." Dylan had met her fiancé and supposedly told her that if she married him she would be miserable. Then he took out the poem that he was typing throughout the film—the poem that she says was written for her and that she was dying to read—ripped it up into a million pieces and threw it up into the air.

WHEN BOB DYLAN SHOWED UP AT NELL'S, A SUPPER club on 14th Street in New York, people's jaws dropped. All eyes followed him as the maitre d' led him to a center table. When Dylan realized Andy Warhol was sitting at the next table, he hopped right over. Andy was supposed to have been mad at Dylan for stealing supermodel Edie Sedgwick away from him back in the '60s. If that was true, Andy wasn't showing it. Dylan claims not to remember it. Maybe someone confused Dylan with Jim Morrison. Both rock stars had been linked with Edie and both had drifted in and out of the Warhol scene while living in the Chelsea Hotel; Dylan and his wife lived there until their first kid was born. In any event, Dylan had traded an Andy Warhol *Elvis* painting for a sofa and always wanted to confess to Andy what a dumb thing he had done. He had always wanted to tell Andy that if he would give him another painting, he'd never do it again. More than likely Andy would have offered to sell Dylan a painting, but he died shortly thereafter.

BOB DYLAN HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO REMAIN UNDERCOVER as much as possible. That may explain the hats. There was the corduroy brakeman's cap with the snap bill; the black stovepipe hat he wore in *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*; the white felt hat he wore in *The Last Waltz*; and the yarmulke he wore to the Walling Wall. If he's wearing a hat, usually it's some kind of cowboy hat, but not necessarily a classic like the one he's tipping on the cover of *Nashville Skyline*. Judging from his hat, it's hard to say exactly what kind of cowboy Dylan is.

Dylan's worn bowlers and top hats and the kind of straw hats you'd wear to a clambake. He's worn a bandana and a big gold earring like a pirate or Gypsy, and he'd probably wear a hood all the time if he could, but it's been quite a while since he gave a concert wearing nothing but a pith helmet.

WHEN HE PERFORMED AT THIS YEAR'S GRAMMYS, AT which he was to receive a special achievement award, Dylan and his band wore fedoras and performed "Masters of War," arranged in a way nobody had heard before. When the song was over, Dylan took off his hat to remove his guitar, then quickly put his hat back on, as if he were hiding a bald spot he didn't want anybody to know about. The award was presented by Jack Nicholson, who seems to be holding his own in the hair department.

Dylan tried to begin his acceptance speech with something his daddy once told him, but he couldn't seem to remember what it was. His daddy had told him so many things, he finally said, after a very long and awkward pause.

Later that night Dylan attended a post-Grammy party at the Rainbow Room with his mother, who was his date. She had once told him always to wear a hat when it rained.

THE FIRST SINGER TO BE HAILED THE NEW BOB DYLAN was Donovan. At one time he even went around on the arm of Joan Baez. The best new Dylan was Neil Young. He didn't really sound like Dylan, nor did he try to; he just wrote such great songs that there was no one else to compare him to. One of those songs was "Heart of Gold," which was a No. 1 hit in 1972. Dylan says the only time it bothered him that someone sounded like him was when he was living in Phoenix, Arizona, trying to forget about things—himself included—and that song would come on the radio. There he was, but it wasn't him. It seemed someone had taken his thing and run away with it. He never got over it.

Bob Marley was the first New Black Bob Dylan. The two almost met in Houston, except while Dylan was on his way over to the club where Marley was playing, Marley was on his way to the club where Dylan was playing. Then there was Bruce Springsteen, but he didn't sound at all like Dylan. Mark Knopfler really sounds like Dylan, though the similarity apparently never bothered Dylan, maybe because Knopfler never had a No. 1 record. Tom Petty was almost the New Bob Dylan, but he was probably too old. Billy Bragg was sensitive, political, and acoustic; he lasted as the New English Bob Dylan for about five minutes. In the end, of course, there's only one New Bob Dylan, and that's always been Bob Dylan. ☞

IN CONCERT

By David Sokol

Blowin' in the Wind

Dylan does UMass

Zany Bob In

By DAVID HINCKLEY

Daily News Staff Writer

ROLLING THROUGH THE third summer of what his fans have come to call the Neverending Tour, Bob Dylan showed up at Jones Beach last Thursday night with a fistful of lesser known songs and a mouthful of chatty remarks.

The latter fact came as far more of a surprise than the former.

Before he sang "Girl From the North Country," he remarked, "Anybody here ever been rejected?" This song's about being rejected." He introduced "When I Paint My Masterpiece" as "my life story right here."

He asked everyone if they'd seen the eclipse. Perhaps best of all, he ended "Everything Is Broken" by saying, "That's 'Everything Is Broken.' You know, you can't fix it unless it's broken."

That is to say, he did not stop being Dylan. But he seemed relaxed and pleased to be here. During "Wiggle Wiggle," he mimed a brief vamp with the guitar, and during "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight," he tossed in a playful run from "Rainy Day Women." That zany Bob.

Maybe he was just happy he had the opportunity to sing the line "Oh, to be back in the land of Coca-Cola" under the two huge Coca-Cola Jones Beach sponsorship banners.

That line is from "When I Paint My Masterpiece," and on Thursday the song was exactly that: a powerful anthem about struggle. He sang it clearly by Dylan standards — his voice was good Thursday, but enunciation is never his strong suit — and it probably helps that he didn't record it commercially when he wrote it in the early '70s, so the audience

It's such a nice day, isn't it? Too nice a day to sing this song to somebody, but sometimes too soon isn't soon enough." Last Sunday was a beautiful day indeed, the song was "Positively 4th Street" and the singer none other than Bob Dylan, the headliner at UMass' annual Spring Concert on the Amherst campus. (Chucklehead, the Feelies and Gene Loves Jezebel) opened the show; De La Soul's bus broke down near Hartford and had to cancel.)

By the time most of the 10,000 or so in attendance (only with student I.D. or special "guest" status) at the UMass bash were born. "Positively 4th Street," a biting Top 10 hit from 1965 was already an oldie. And so, for that matter, were the bulk of the songs pulled out of the master's Panama hat during his romantically (as opposed to politically) inclined 80-minute set.

What would life be like without "Like a Rolling Stone," "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright," "It Ain't Me, Babe" or "Blowin' in the Wind," all of which were given powerful enough treatment to get the hearts of anyone appreciative of Dylan's place in contemporary history beating extra fast, even if he muffed some lyrics and mumbled several more. But there he was, and there were those songs, right on the campus pond lawn, for all to see and hear.

Dylan, who had played Western Connecticut State University the day before (for a \$19 general admission

ticket; this concert was free for students and off limits to everyone else), was unusually lighthearted, cheerful and almost goofy at times in the Amherst sun, tipping his hat frequently and even plunking on the electric piano at the front of the stage. And throughout the show, he was obviously enjoying the youthful adulation, which included enthusiastic sing-alongs during "Like a Rolling Stone" and "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," true affirmation that his songs are immortal, even if he is graying and wrinkling.

For Dylan, just a week shy of his 50th birthday, the pressure is off. The intensity is there, but only because he is the premier songwriter of our time and his important songs still ring as loudly as they ever did. He could play Vegas and the power of his music would still be transcendent.

In Amherst, Hibbing, Minnesota's favorite son (sorry Kevin McHale) and his three-piece backup band also dipped into some recent songs like "Everything is Broken," "Shooting Star" and the lightweight, out of character "Wiggle Wiggle." Even they have power, though they land somewhat uncomfortably next to the classics.

Some of the kids at UMass were disappointed that INXS, a band considered for the Spring Concert, weren't there (they cost a lot), but five, 10 and 20 years down the line, Dylan's songs of the '60s, '70s and '80s will still be indelibly stamped in our consciousness. INXS will just be a footnote.

Some of the kids at UMass were disappointed that INXS, a band considered for the Spring Concert, weren't there (they cost a lot), but five, 10 and 20 years down the line, Dylan's songs of the '60s, '70s and '80s will still be indelibly stamped in our consciousness. INXS will just be a footnote.

In fact, the only semi-predictable thing about Dylan on this tour is that he will do an acoustic segment in the middle of the show. Thursday, that included first-rate versions of "Don't Think Twice" and "Barbara Allen." You could hear almost every word, too.

May his stone keep rolling.

Sweet Imperfection

wasn't comparing this rendition to a well-known recorded version.

As usual with Dylan, that did happen a lot Thursday, as he overhauled virtually every tune he sang. Two songs he recorded country-style, "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" and "Lay Lady Lay," became rockers here. The folksy rocker "Shelter From the Storm" became country.

SO IT SOMETIMES TOOK half the song to figure out what he was singing, but it was worth the effort, largely because he was digging out less fa-

HIS TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

DYLAN TURNS 50

By BRUCE DANCIS

(c) McClatchy News Service
L McClellan says that Bob Dylan never recovered from his serious motorcycle crash of July 1966, and never made it to the 50th birthday he'll be celebrating Friday. My guess is that we would still be honoring the anniversary of the birth of America's greatest singer/song-writer, so notable were the milestones he achieved and the paths he blazed from 1962 to 1966.

No one, with the exception of the Beatles, matched Dylan's impact as an oracle and interpreter of the social, political, cultural and musical changes let loose by the post-World War II generation.

But Bob Dylan did recover from his accident. And even if his subsequent recordings and concerts, in one man's opinion, failed to reach the heights of his earlier work (much like John Lennon and Paul McCartney after the Beatles disbanded), the body of work he did produce—from his basement sessions with the Band in 1967 to 1975's "Blood on the Tracks" to 1989's "Oh Mercy"—would be considered staggeringly brilliant if made by anybody else.

For all he has given us in nearly 30 years of performing and recording, here's a happy 50th birthday tribute to Bob Dylan, born Robert Allen Zimmerman in Duluth, Minn., on May 24, 1941. (He legally changed his name, after Dylan Thomas, in 1962.)

• Reviving the American folk song: The folk song revival had already begun when Dylan arrived in New York from Minnesota in late 1960. But within a little more than a year, his gritty, blues-based singing, guitar and harmonica playing and his self-titled first album were attracting significant attention. From the beginning, he had an authenticity that the more bland folk-music stars, like the Kingston Trio, never had.

• Conscience of a generation: No one else approached Dylan's ability to articulate in song the struggle for civil rights and the nascent movement against the folly of war. Whether in multi-issue anthems like "Blowin' in the Wind," "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" and "The Times They Are A-Changin'" or more closely targeted songs like "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" and "With God on Our Side," he was in a class by himself.

• Civil rights activism: Dylan's support for civil rights went beyond writing movement anthems. Despite some personal danger, he flew to Greenwood, Miss., in July 1963 to sing at a rally for a voter registration drive being conducted by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. The next month he participated in the huge March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. And earlier he had done benefits in New York for the Congress of Racial Equality.

• Political acuity: Unlike many Northern liberals or other topical singers like Phil Ochs, Dylan refused to take a smugly superior attitude toward Southern whites, or view them simply as the enemy. In the remarkable "Only a Pawn in Their Game" Dylan showed a rare political depth by recognizing the ways in which poor whites were used by segregationists to keep down the aspirations of poor blacks, as well as their own.

• Refusing to buckle under to TV censorship: When Dylan was informed by CBS-TV executives that he would not be allowed to perform "Talkin' John Birch Society Blues" on "The Ed Sullivan Show," he refused to substitute a less-controversial song. He never appeared on the show.

• Writing brilliant love songs: Acoustic or electric, celebrating a new love or decrying one lost, Dylan has always written love songs of consummate beauty and wisdom. A Top 10 list might include: "Tomorrow Is a Long Time," "Love Is Just a Four-Letter Word," "Corrina, Corrina," "Don't Think Twice It's All Right," "She Belongs to Me," "Love Minus Zero/No Limit," "Just Like a Woman," "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" and "Lay, Lady, Lay." And that only takes him through 1969.

• Starting in one of the best music movies ever made: It's not altogether flattering to its star, who revealed a petty mean

streak along with his abundant talent. But D.A. Pennebaker's "Don't Look Back," a documentary on Dylan's 1965 tour of England, still stands as one of the great films about pop music.

• Creating folk rock: In 1965, when Dylan added electric guitar, bass and drums to his music, he left behind the pristine confinements of folk music and turned the larger world of pop music upside down by merging the lyricism and melody of folk with the powerful blast of rock'n'roll. Through his own albums in the epochal years of 1965 and '66 ("Bringing It All Back Home," "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Blonde on Blonde"), the hit songs he provided for others and in his popular but controversial live performances he managed to push even the Beatles and the Rolling Stones off center stage.

• Counterculture hero: In this period, roughly 1964-67, Dylan defined the attitude of the emerging youth culture: its stance ("How does it feel to be on your own, with no direction home?") "Something is happening here and you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones?"; its relationship to hallucinogenic drugs ("Mr. Tambourine Man" is probably the purest marijuana-haze song ever written); and its rejection of the American system ("Maggie's Farm," "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue.")

• Breaking the time barrier for a rock single: Before Dylan, rock songs were two- or three-minute affairs. While this wasn't necessarily a bad thing, it was a hindrance for the more creative artists in the field. "Like a Rolling Stone," clocking in at just about six minutes, was unprecedented and paved the way for more adventurous records by the Beatles, the Stones and others.

• Introducing emotional and lyrical complexity and poetic imagery to the Top 40: Before 1965, rock songs could be clever and moving, but they never reached the depth that the electrified Dylan brought. As a poet, he broke all the boundaries for imagery and word-play, and exerted a tremendous influence on other musicians.

• Making it OK for guys with unconventional voices to become rock stars: Dylan never sounded like a "ringer"—he'd misla notes, swallow phrases, mumble, throw in an unwritten "Ahhhh" that somehow worked perfectly in the context of a song. In short, despite the harshness of his tone, Dylan's vocal style was unique, believable and compelling. Can you imagine Neil Young without Dylan coming first? Or Bruce Springsteen?

• Making it OK for guys with unconventional looks to become rock stars: The long hair worn by the British Invasion bands made the first assault on the pop-star-as-matinee-idol tradition, but even they used looks and sex appeal in their marketing. Not Dylan. He wasn't necessarily bad looking, but no one ever mistook him for Elvis or Paul (the Cute One) McCartney.

• Having a sense of humor: Although most of his songs are serious, Dylan occasionally revealed a deliciously absurd wit. Here's a Top 10 funny Dylan song list, not counting the often hilarious liner notes he wrote to accompany his earliest albums: "All I Really Want to Do," "Motorpsycho Nightmare," "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream," "Highway 61 Revisited," "Rainy Day Woman 12 & 35," "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat," "Absolutely Sweet Marie," "Milton Dollar Bash," "Please, Mrs. Henry," and "Dirty World" (Traveling Wilburys).

• Introducing Al Kooper to the electric organ: Kooper, then a relatively unknown New York musician, came into the "Highway 61 Revisited" recording sessions hoping to play electric guitar with Dylan. But when Dylan arrived at the studio with the formidable guitarist Michael Bloomfield already in tow, it was suggested by producer Thom Wilson that Kooper play organ instead—an instrument he had never played before. The rest is history, or rather, the organ blasts that embellish the monumental "Like a Rolling Stone." Kooper went on to play organ (and guitar and piano) with the Blues Project and Blood, Sweat and Tears.

• Creating a new form of American ensemble rock with the Band: While recovering from his mid-'60s motorcycle accident in Woodstock, N.Y., Dylan began to play and record informally at a large house known as Big Pink. The group of musicians he played with became known as the Band, and together they developed an engaging, authentic new sound in rock that melded rock'n'roll, R&B, country and blues. At first, the results of their collaboration became known through the Band's first album, "Music From Big Pink," which featured three new Dylan songs.

• Inspiring the new phenomenon of record bootlegging: During his recuperation period, the demand for new Dylan material was so great that an illegal tape of Dylan's recordings with the Band, titled "Great White Wonder," received distribution throughout North America and England. Over the years, according to some estimates, it sold 350,000 copies.

• Folling the bootleggers: In 1975, eight years after they were recorded, Dylan released "The Basement Tapes," a two-record set of songs that represented the official legacy of those Dylan/Band sessions in Woodstock. Years later, in 1991, Dylan offered up another trip to the vaults, the official "Bootleg Series," which included rare studio and live concert recordings from throughout his career.

• Helping create country rock: Although sole credit can't be given to Dylan for starting the country rock boom of the late-'60s/early '70s, his country-influenced "John Wesley Harding" album, recorded late in 1967, and the even more countrified "Nashville Skyline" (released in May 1969, and featuring a duet with Johnny Cash) led the way. The Byrds, the Flying Burrito Brothers and other groups followed shortly behind.

• Appearing at George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh: Having made only two live appearances since his motorcycle accident, Dylan's surprise performance at this Madison Square Garden benefit in 1971 was one of the noteworthy music events of the decade. The star in an all-star cast including two Beatles (Harrison and Ringo Starr) and Eric Clapton, Dylan stunned the crowd with a dynamic set that included "Blowin' in the Wind" and "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall." The concert and subsequent three-record package and film documentary raised millions of dollars for UNICEF.

• Touring with the Band: Beginning in January 1974, Dylan embarked on his first tour in eight years.

• Answering those who thought he was through: Following the release of greatest-hits albums, live albums and mediocre new albums, Dylan responded to those who said he couldn't write good songs any more by releasing "Blood on the Tracks" early in 1975. It was a harrowing collection of songs about relationships falling apart, sung with a ferocity that came close to his mid-'60s best.

Tracks" early in 1975. It was a harrowing collection of songs about relationships falling apart, sung with a ferocity that came close to his mid-'60s best.

- Coming to the defense of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter: Dylan joined the effort to free the former middleweight fighter, imprisoned in New Jersey for a murder he and supporters claimed he didn't commit. Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue held a benefit concert in December 1975 to raise funds and interest in the case. Dylan's "Hurricane," his most serious protest song in years, was the highlight of the "Desire" album, released early in 1976. Carter was finally exonerated nearly a decade later.

- Turning to Christianity: Dylan's public proclamations that he had been "born again" shocked and dismayed many of his most loyal fans—though it also served to illustrate that his artistic integrity remained as courageous as ever. What was occasionally obscured in the controversy was the fact that Dylan's singing and performing on 1979's "Slow Train Coming" and subsequent tour was his most passionate and heartfelt in years.

- Returning to social activism: By the mid-'80s Dylan had moved away from Christianity and began lending his support to social causes that resembled the issues that engaged him as a young folksinger. In 1985-86, he took part in various anti-hunger concerts and recordings ("We Are the World," Live Aid, Farm Aid), joined Artists Against Apartheid in singing "Sun City," and appeared with Stevie Wonder at the first Martin Luther King Day celebration in Washington, D.C.

- Pioneering the boxed-set retrospective: More than a new marketing tool to sell more (and more expensive) albums, "Biograph" was a 63-song compilation ranging throughout Dylan's recording career, featuring 18 previously unreleased tracks. It was accompanied by a well-researched biography and featured Dylan's own comments about the origins, production and meaning of many of his most important songs. The commercial success of "Biograph" essentially opened up a new market for historical anthologies.

- Joining the Traveling Wilburys: In late 1988, Dylan got together with George Harrison, Roy Orbison, Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne to create a refreshing antidote to over-produced techno-pop music and a return to the old-fashioned virtues of melody, camaraderie, spontaneity and humor.

- Performing at the 1991 Grammy Awards: Gulf War fever was in the air when Dylan, on hand to receive a lifetime achievement award, confounded just about everyone by performing a dissonant, hard-rock version of one of his most pointed anti-war songs, "Masters of War."

- Contributing to an album to help children with AIDS: Dylan's performance of "This Old Man" on the Disney album "For Our Children," a May 1991 effort to raise funds for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, was a delight. Just hearing him sing "nick nack paddy wack, give a dog a bone" can make your day.

- Never giving up: Bob Dylan has been counted out and then come back more times than any other figure in American popular music. After 30 years as a performer and 50 years on Earth, he is continually reinterpreting his past and reinventing himself.

Strike another match, go start anew.

Bob Dylan Is On

The Road Again

BOB DYLAN. The venerable singer-songwriter on a college tour, Tuesday night at the Indoor Sports Complex, State University at Stony Brook, L.I.

By Wayne Robins
STAFF WRITER

IT'S DIFFICULT TO THINK OF another performer who worked as hard at sabotaging his legacy as Bob Dylan. For years — going back at least to the late 1970s — he has been rearranging his classic songs with a determined mindlessness. On February's

with Dylan's catalog to determine which song was being performed at any given time. There were songs in which the tempo was conventional, but the lyric phrasing rushed, as on "Lay Lady Lay." You could catch chord cues to suggest that Dylan and his three backing musicians were performing "All Along the Watchtower," but the arrangement had so much white noise it could have been Albert Ayler or Sun Ra.

"It Ain't Me Babe" was performed acoustically, but the rushed lyrics drained the song of its tension. It so confounded one fan who tried to sing along that she asked: "What happened to all those lyrics that were so beautiful?"

Well, he doesn't sing them like that anymore, and he sure doesn't write them. One new song Dylan performed was "Wiggle Wiggle Wiggle," whose nonsense syllables are the ultimate expression of contempt towards the affecting words he used to write.

Dylan did a few songs from his 1979 "Slow Train Coming," the best of his born-again albums. "Slow Train" was dirge-like as ever, while "Gotta Serve Somebody" had some surprisingly attention-holding moments of guitar interplay. Dylan, playing guitar and harmonica, was joined by John Johnson on guitar, Ian Wallace on drums, and Tony Garnier on bass. Bracing guitar work elevated "Highway 61 Revisited," though the noisy blues arrangement was more Johnny Winter than Mike Bloomfield.

Though Dylan has repeatedly tried to make incomprehensibility a virtue, it wasn't entirely his responsibility Tuesday night. It was the first major concert at the new



AP Photo

Bob Dylan, improvising as always with his standards

Grammy awards TV show, he rendered his once-noble "Masters of War" unintelligible. Tuesday's show at Stony Brook was much more of the same.

Some people wonder what Dylan is doing on the road at all, much less on a college tour. The guess here is that Dylan, so ill at ease as a living legend, enjoys the routine and camaraderie of being an ordinary working musician.

Though the job may help Dylan feel demystified, his show Tuesday night only enhanced his troubled-legend stature. It was a struggle for one even thoroughly familiar

Stony Brook 4,800-seat indoor sports complex. The high ceilings and harsh angles, and corrugated metal construction made the room an acoustic disaster. The tiny metal chairs seemed built for nursery school students. There was an overabundance of intrusive security guards. All patrons were searched at the doors before going through metal detectors. It's hard to say what was worse: the idea that metal detectors were needed for a Dylan concert, or that, according to co-promoter Larry Vaughan, a hundred knives were taken at the door. / 11



JERRY GARCIA BAND

Jerry Garcia Band (Arista/All formats)
THOSE FAMILIAR with the doings of The Grateful Dead will know that the band flower best when they are playing live rather than being buried for weeks in some recording studio. Such is the case with the Jerry Garcia Band, a Dead offshoot which allows the guitarist a lot more room to spread his playing around.

Recorded live last year at Club Front, San Rafael, California, this double disc/tape set captures the Garcia posse in fine form, a collection of originals and cover versions which are obviously dear to the grizzled old master guitarist's heart.

Backed by the playing of bassist John Kahn, drummer David Kemper, background vocalists Jackie LaBranch and Gloria Jones and the swirling keyboard sound of Melvin Seals (whose playing occasionally brings original Dead organ grinder Pigpen back to life), Garcia picks his way through a leisurely paced set which includes songs from The Beatles, Peter Tosh, Jesse Stone, The Band and Bob Dylan.

It is his treatment of the Dylan material which really shines through here, however. Dylan diehards who bemoaned the teaming of their hero with the Dead in '89 will have little cause to wail again when they hear Garcia's sensitive treatment of such classics as 'Tangled Up In Blue', 'Senor (Tales Of Yankee Power)', and 'Simple Twist Of Fate'. Dylan's biblical tales of the lost and lonely are faithfully recited by Garcia and given an extra boost when his mercurial guitar playing is let loose.

Despite the occasional crack-throated vocal ('Dear Prudence' being especially unbearable) this long, hallucinatory performance from the Jerry Garcia Band has more than its share of magic moments. (8)

Edwin Pouncey

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Bob Dylan Songbook Connoisseur Collection VSOP CD 158 (also MC)

Another compilation in which various notables (and some obscure) pay homage (or not) to the ex-Bobby Vee sideman who turned 50 recently. This one has 24 tracks, all of which are interesting and over half of which are to my taste.

Fairport's *Si Tu Dois Partir* with Sandy Denny's fine lead vocal and the spoons solo should be familiar and sounds great, as do the two tracks from *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* by The Byrds, *You Ain't Goin' Nowhere* and *Nothing Was Delivered*. *Outlaw Blues* by Dave Edmunds is as you might expect, but it's interesting to compare and contrast the versions of *Absolutely Sweet Marie* by the Flamin' Groovies (on this album) and by Jason And The Scorchers (from *The Songs of Bob Dylan* on Start records). Pretty much a dead heat...

I Pity the Poor Immigrant by Judy Collins comes from her fabulous *Who Knows Where The Time Goes* album and includes Stephen Stills, James Burton and Buddy Emmons. *Tomorrow Is A Long Time* is the best of three tracks here featuring Rod Stewart - this one's done acoustically and avoids his later excesses, which are more noticeable on the string backed *Girl Of The North Country* and *Wicked Messenger* from the first Faces album.

Fotheringay's *Too Much Of Nothing* has muscular lead vocals from Trevor Lucas and patented Jerry Donahue guitar (but not much Sandy Denny), while the revelation here is Stan Campbell's *Knocking On Heaven's Door* - he was going to be a star a few years ago, but seems to have vanished. *You Angel You* by Manfred Mann's Earth Band is impressive, more impressive than the version of *Mighty Quinn* by Gary Puckett and the Union Gap(!)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Bob Dylan Songbook (Connoisseur)

Ideal present for anyone who loves the way that Dylan writes, but still thinks he can't sing for toffee. While there are few surprises here, you can't help but be impressed by the wealth of talent crammed onto this 24 track, nearly 80 minute CD.

There are all the usual suspects: Rod Stewart ('Gid From The North Country'), The Band ('Tears Of Rage'), The Byrds ('You Ain't Going Nowhere'), Julie Driscoll & Brian Auger ('This Wheel's On Fire'), Johnny Cash ('Wanted Man'). But there are also a number of surprises, pleasant and otherwise: Fotheringay's 'Too Much Of Nothing', The Hollies' 'When The Ship Comes In', Dave Edmunds' swag-gering 'Outlaw Blues', The Walker Brothers' 'Love Minus Zero', Bobby Darin's surprisingly sensitive 'Blowing In The Wind' and Alan Price's stately solo 'To Ramona'.

It's a testament to Dylan's genius that his material can be covered by such a wide range of acts, in so many different styles - acoustic folk, druggy rock'n'roll, folk-rock, country-rock, blues. Here's something for everyone, from everyone.

(7) Patrick Humphries

which is a carbon copy of the Manfred/Mike d'Abo version from virtually the same time. We know who won that chart race, but which of the two recorded it first? Great to hear the Julie Driscoll/Brian Auger *This Wheel's On Fire* again, and the same goes for Johnny Winter's *Highway 61* and Solomon Burke's *Maggie's Farm* (from the '60s).

And then - *All I Really Want To Do* by Cher (with tambourines a gogo - a coincidence?), Johnny Cash's *Wanted Man* from *Live At Saint Quentin* which is appropriate, a very straight *To Ramona* by Alan Price (vocal with his own piano accompaniment, very spartan), *Tears Of Rage* by The Band with its laboured Dixieland feel, *Love Minus Zero* by The Walker Brothers which comes across like *Save the Last Dance for Me* by The Drifters, *Blowing In The Wind* by Bobby Darin - the man who gave us *Dreama Lover* and *Mack The Knife*, but here sounds like Tony Bennett. Very curate's egg, some of this, although Nina Simone's *Ballad Of Hollis Brown* just seems long, like a female Richie Havens, and it's hard to believe *When The Ship Comes In* by The Hollies, with its George Formbyesque banjo and its bright and heavily clichéd arrangement.

There has not been yet a perfect 20 track album of Dylan covers, although both this one and the Start album mentioned above are worthy attempts. The inherent copyright problems associated with licensing material from many sources make such a project a potential minefield, of course, but with Mr Anderson's permission, it might be interesting to invite *Folk Roots* readers to submit their perfect twenty-track album of Dylan Covers. No Dylan performances, no more than one version of each song. The prize? A visit to Macdonalds with Ken Hunt, second prize, two visits etc....

John Tobler

JOHN HAMMOND: FROM BESSIE SMITH TO BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

SMV, 60 mins

John Hammond was the talent scout's talent scout, upon whose tastes was built the market pre-eminence of CBS. This engrossing biopic tells his story through the careers of those he discovered; seeing as they include Bessie Smith, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, George Benson, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen, it's something of a wonder that they fit it into an hour without things seeming too cramped. Hammond had an effect on jazz that was incalculable: he financed Bessie Smith's recording sessions out of his own pocket, he recorded Billie Holiday, and stayed firm in her support when industry know-naughts criticised her unusual voice. The crowning glory of his pre-war career, however, was probably the two ground-breaking evenings of "negro music" he staged at Carnegie Hall in December 1938.

Post-war, he signed both Aretha and George Benson to Columbia, but his greatest triumph was when the young Dylan - "Hammond's Folly" to industry mavens - captured the youthful zeitgeist. Concise and episodic, this is an illuminating portrait of a man who, in every sentence he speaks, can't hide the sheer delight he takes in music, and the consequent amazement that he's been allowed to live his life so close to its cutting edge. A&R men, take note. ★★ ★★
Andy Gill

GREAT
DOUBLE
ALBUMS

DOUBLE TOP

• Doubles all round! 'Use Your Illusion I' . . . 'Use Your Illusion II' . . . 'Weld' . . . 'Screamadelica' . . . erm!, that's it. Rock's most maligned format, the double LP, is back! But has it really been 25 years of gate-folded shite? *NME*, amazingly, says not and sets out the definitive four-sided groove machines . . .



Congratulations to His Bobness, who scores in all three categories of Great Double Albums – best, worst and mentioned in dispatches

BOB DYLAN: 'Blonde On Blonde' (CBS 1966)

DIZZYINGLY HOT on the heels of 'Bringing It All Back Home' and 'Highway 61 Revisited', final, emphatic proof of Dylan's mid-'60s genius came with this – rock's first ever double album (FACT!). As the Dylan bores essayed in *NME*'s 50th birthday cap-doffing, . . . "a white water ride through every neglected backwater of American popular music, Blues, mariachi, calypso, carnival, country and ragtime soundtrack Dylan's ever-shifting raft of relationships (good, bad and indifferent) with women." Not much to add, except beware cheap CD imitations! Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands' is robbed of a harmonica solo to cram it on a single disc. Heretics!

ON THE DOUBLE

Also recommended

BOB DYLAN AND THE BAND: 'Before The Flood' (Island 1974)

Dylan kicks The Band up the arse, The Band force Dylan to sing in tune

SHOULD'VE BEEN AN EP

***NME* names the worst double albums of all-time**

BOB DYLAN: 'Self Portrait' (CBS 1970)

Presumably a joke on his audience, it features a vindictive trashing of 'The Boxer' by Paul Simon and an appalling cover drawing by Dylan himself

REISSUES: George Harrison's Concert For Bangladesh, the godfather of superstar charity knees-ups, has reappeared on two CDs (Epic). However, apart from its historical interest, there isn't a lot going for it, since the 20 years since it was recorded have not been kind. The music, now, seems mostly like early-Seventies superstar stodge. Harrison's tunes like Wah-Wah, My Sweet Lord and Beware Of Darkness are turgid and self-righteous, and his theme song, Bangla Desh, is deeply unmemorable.

The best value by far is the Bob Dylan section, since this was before the old goat lost his voice and his marbles. Tambourine Man and Just Like A Woman are particularly affecting . . .

VARIOUS

The Concert For Bangla Desh (Epic Cassette/CD)

"THIS IS the record that put world music back two decades," moans a colleague at the sound of West meeting East in Madison Square Gardens, 1971 for a charitable beano that's big on names, but not so forthcoming on thrills.

The worst incident by far is when Ravi Shankar – who's already asked the audience to refrain from smoking – spends a minute or so tuning up. After he's done he gets a nice ripple of applause – everybody figured it was a groovy composition! Even worse, Ravi is a condescending old goat for the duration.

George Harrison (the benefit's figurehead), Ringo and Eric Clapton all shake it about after a feeble fashion (maybe Ravi should have enforced a no-drugs

regime backstage), and it's only the arrival of Bob Dylan that truly tickles your sensibilities. He's a good feller though, getting cheerful and obliging over a slew of his top songs, with a prize mention for 'Just Like A Woman' – all angsty and twisted and pointing forwards to 'Blood On The Tracks' four years after.

If you like Dylan, this long-deleted record has some sparkling bits and will register an (8), but the other mortals are already booking their tickets to a Town Called Wilbury, somewhere in (5) county.

Stuart Bailie

DON'T LOOK BACK (BBC2, 12am). Revealing and poignant documentary on Bob Dylan's 1965 British tour. Worth watching if only for film of Dylan's classic 'The Times They Are A-Changing, 1967. B&W. PG. www.bbc.co.uk

Don't Look Back BBC2, 12.00midnight-1.40am (00.00-01.40) 'Is this called Merseyside?' Bob Dylan (50 in May) arrives in Britain for his 1965 concert tour, and D A Pennebaker's camera follows him almost everywhere he goes. This is a pioneering 'fly-on-the-wall' documentary, which established the format for movies of star tours. Songs include 'The Times They Are A-Changin'', and there are amusing encounters with Donovan and Alan Price. (1967). Rating **★★★★**

Don't Look Back (US 1967/Dir DA Pennebaker) A documentary about Bob Dylan's British concert tour in 1965. The music will please the fans, but the frenzied style of the film and Dylan's off-stage personality will irritate. He might be a great poet but he comes across as thick as two bricks. Either that or he feels so superior that he doesn't need to make any sense. In 1987 I organised a press conference with him and he was just the same -- only worse. The times, they aren't a-changin'. **★★**

DON'T LOOK FURTHER

I know that various books and albums were released to coincide with **BOB DYLAN's** 50th birthday celebrations but do you know of any videos? Apart from *Don't Look Back* I've never come across any non-bootleg Dylan videos -- do any exist?
Bev Smith, Worthing

■ *David L Clark, genius of rock-video research, perused his extensive files to supply the answer to this one and came up with the following. Two main Dylan video releases are still available, these being Don't Look Back (Virgin VVD 251, £12.23) and Hard To Handle (Virgin VVD 182, £10.21), which documents an Australian concert with Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers in 1986. He can also be glimpsed in such feature movies as Hearts Of Fire (Guild 8519, £10.21), Pat Garrett And Billy The Kid (MGM/UA UMV 10159 - deleted in 1987) and Catchfire (First Independent VA 20125, £84.95), a 1989 thriller involving Dennis Hopper and Jodie Foster, in which Dylan makes a cameo appearance as an art teacher.*

Dylan also appears in the following: Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music (Intervision, deleted in 1981) - Cash and Dylan performing 'One Two Many Mornings' in a recording studio; The Concert For Bangladesh (originally released by Thorn-EMI but now available on Weintraub/Warner PES 38084, £10.21) - Dylan performing 'A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall', 'It Takes A Lot To Laugh, It Takes A Train To Cry', 'Blowin' In The Wind' and 'Just Like A Woman'; The Last Waltz (Warner PES 99354, £10.21) - Dylan joins The Band at their historic 1976 farewell concert to perform 'Forever Young', 'Baby Let Me Follow You Down' and 'I Shall Be Released'; The Other Side Of Nashville (Originally on MGM-UA but reissued on Channel 5/Polygram CFM 02542, £10.21) - contains the previously mentioned Dylan-Johnny Cash 'One Too Many Mornings' clip; Rock 'n' Roll - The Greatest Years. 1963 - Buy It And Boogie (Video Collection VC 4054, £10.21) - includes a live clip of Dylan performing 'Blowin' In The Wind'; Rolling

Stone - 20 Years Of Rock (Castle-Hendring HEN 2315, £10.21) - features Dylan singing 'Tangled Up In Blue', Sixties Mix - USA (Stylus SV 0855/2 deleted in 1990) - Dylan provides a live version of 'Mr Tambourine Man'; USA For Africa - We Are The World - The Video Event (Picture Music International MVA 004, £5.99) - this video charts the recording stages of this fund-raising single on which Dylan warbled alongside an all-star cast; A Vision Shared - A Tribute To Woody Guthrie And Leadbelly (CMV Enterprises 01-049006-81, £12.23) - Bob contributes 'Song To Woody', set to stills of the young Dylan; Country Music Video Magazine - Premiere Collectors Edition (BMG 7-90453, £10.21) - includes a 15-second clip of the recent Byrds reunion concert with Dylan guesting on 'Mr Tambourine Man'; John Hammond - From Bessie Smith To Bruce Springsteen (SMV Enterprises 49057-2, £10.21) - includes a conversation with Dylan, clips from a Dylan press conference, scenes from an early '60s open-air live show, a TV studio performance of 'A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall' and the 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' snippet from Don't Look Back.

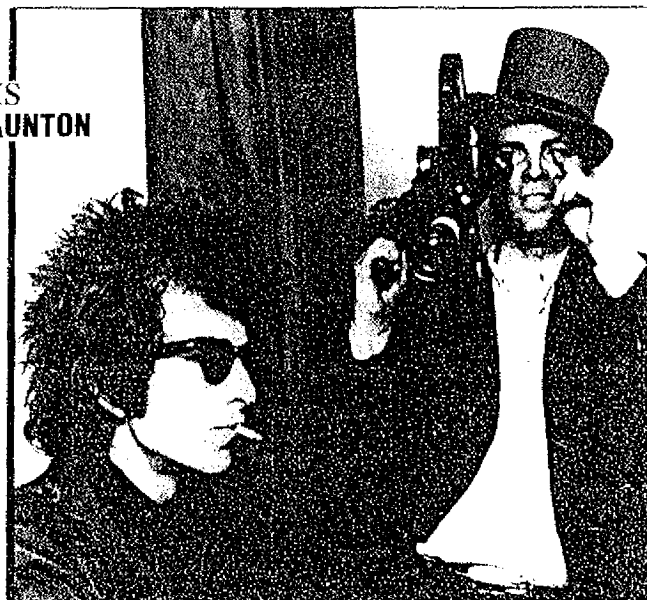


PICTURE LEFT

"Hey, do you think they'll make a video of this?"
"Well, if Hearts Of Fire got a release. . ."

● THE 20 GREATEST ROCK FILMS VIEWED BY TERRY 'BEST BOY' STAUNTON

DON'T LOOK BACK (DA Pennebaker, 1965) **GROUND BREAKING DOCUMENTARY** of Dylan's 1965 UK tour, with Pennebaker allowing the events to take over the narrative rather than working from any kind of shooting script. Dylan the Messiah is seen as the anarchic brat firing off verbal missives in all directions, interspersed with great concert footage from the Royal Albert Hall show. Bob comes across as a self-centred, unlikeable little shit, and he actually had a hand in withdrawing the film from distribution in the mid-'70s. It re-emerged a few years ago on video to become a best seller.



**BOB DYLAN -
A PORTRAIT
OF THE
ARTIST'S
EARLY YEARS**
Daniel Kramer

PLEXUS 180pp £9.99

In his early 20s, Robert Zimmerman was unfeasibly, unbeatably, unbearably cool. Unlike the more recent shambling, zonked-out Traveling Wilbury, this Bob Dylan dressed sharply and exuded a sense of pure control that people have tried to ape for the last 25 years.

Dan Kramer hung around with Dylan in the mid-'60s, took the cover shots of 'Bringing It All Back Home' and 'Highway 61 Revisited', and originally brought out this book of superb portraits in 1967. It's the definitive guide to which way to hold your Fender Jaguar and how to wear your drainpipes correctly. ■■■■

WILLIAM SHAW



**BOB DYLAN: A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S
EARLY YEARS**

Daniel Kramer

Plexus: £9.99

In 1967, Bob Dylan went to court to try to stop this book. The wise old judge, however, ruled against him, pronouncing it a flattering work which could only enhance the singer's reputation. Quite right too. It wasn't as if there was anything underhand about it either, for New York photographer Daniel Kramer had been granted complete freedom of access to his subject - at home, on stage, in the studio - in 1964 and '65, just as Dylan's fame was skyrocketing, and when he was at his most funnily photogenic.

Thus these black-and-white photographs - sadly inky blurred where once they were pin-sharp - freeze Bob Dylan forever as we all tend to picture him in our minds' eyes, in his

classic curly-haired coolness and wayward whimsicality. Moreover, Kramer's accompanying narrative is informative, perceptive and illuminating, not only about who Bob Dylan once was but, curiously, about who he still is; for as you re-read the author's ages-old observations, you can't help noting that, after 25 years of shape-shifting, the essential Bob Dylan hasn't really changed at all.

★★★★

John Bauldie



Silver-Tongued Devil

Bob Dylan, seer, sage and saucy old goat, back between the covers again.

DYLAN: BEHIND THE SHADES

Clinton Heylin
(Viking, £16.99)

The first Bob Dylan biography, Anthony Scaduto's 1971 effort, enjoyed the benefit of some access to its subject; the second, *No Direction Home* (1986) was written by Robert Shelton, the man who "discovered" him for *The New York Times* in 1961; in 1988 Bob Spitz published the raciest biography thus far, possibly in an attempt to pre-empt Albert Goldman. The stated intention of English Dylanologist Clinton Heylin is to redress the imbalance of the latter pair of books by devoting as much space to his subject's post-motorbike-crash career as is traditionally given over to the period 1961-'66. As he quite reasonably points out, the post-crash era, often dismissed by pop culture pundits as uninterrupted decline, represents five-sixths of Dylan's working life.

Heylin does a more than adequate job of writing Dylan's CV. With the benefit of access to *The Telegraph's* miles of published interviews with well-known Dylan collaborators like D.A. Pennebaker, Ron Wood and Al Kooper as well as less celebrated but no less acute observers like London folk club promoter Anthea Joseph and Newport Festival stage manager Joe Boyd, he is able to supplement the bare facts of Dylan's writing, recording and performing life with eye-witness accounts. If the tiresome view of Dylan by 20/20

hindsight which has afflicted so much writing about his work in the '80s is not already discredited, then Heylin's book should finish the job. Dylan was experimenting with a rock band two years before the dramas of Newport. He had *The Bible* on a lectern in his Woodstock study back in 1968. He is not the bellwether of the Baby Boomers. He is his own man.

But exactly what kind of man Heylin is unable to tell us, not least because he is writing his biography without the advantage of having met his subject or got particularly close to his magic circle. Heylin's perspective is based on assiduous research of published sources and, one must assume, listening to tapes of every concert Dylan has played since the early '60s. Which is illuminating when it throws up characters like art teacher Norman Raeburn, with whom Dylan studied for months in 1974 to learn how to "do consciously what I used to do unconsciously". And when it deals with Fanda McFree, an "art healer" who was employed to work with Dylan's children in the mid-'70s and ended up, like so many of the women this energetic heterosexual has come into contact with, sharing his bed, it's merely frustrating that nobody is there to put the supplementary questions. Where protagonists have not gone on the record they are ignored. This results in the absurd situation of Elliot Roberts, Dylan's manager for several important years, not rating a solitary mention.

Despite an over-reliance on the word "oeuvre", two references to "avaricious" readers and a tendency to blur the picture by putting the boot into any passing musician who has the misfortune not to be Bob Dylan (eg Paul Simon's "shallow" *Graceland*, the "major disappointments" of Peter Gabriel and Robbie Robertson's albums with Daniel Lanois), Heylin's book will stand as the volume of record until something comes along which can take the subject at other than face value. That work might have to wait until Dylan is dead. It's to be hoped that by then Albert Goldman will no longer be available. What he would make of Dylan's sex life does not bear thinking about. ★★

David Hepworth



"I've seen a lot of women...": the conspicuous Bob Dylan with (clockwise from top) Joan Baez in '73, an unknown actress in his '85 *Emotionally Yours* video and Cathy McGowan in '65.

OH NO! NOT ANOTHER BOB DYLAN BOOK

Patrick Humphries & John Bauldie
(Square One, £14.95)

Despite the shtetl title, this large format, photo-filled salute to Dylan - as he notches up his half-century - is an untaxing but welcome supplement to the already bulging *Bibliography*. This latest addition splits roughly into three sections: a rolling, in parts lumbering, account of Dylan's life; a meticulous yet humorous chronology; and a splendid colour photo section (for all Dylan's claims that he doesn't like being photographed by people he doesn't know, he remains one of rock's most photogenic subjects).

Humphries's biography doesn't volunteer much in the way of new information or venture any eye-de-scaling theories, adhering to the standard angry folkie/electric genius/bike crash/vcomfly family man/born-again bible-basher/perma-gigging eccentric storyboard so faithfully revisited in every other Dylan book. But he at least endeavours to contextualise Dylan's work musically and sociologically and maintains a healthy perspective throughout, lapsing only occasionally - and then not uninterestingly - into salivaceous fan worship. "That's Bob Dylan!" he exclaims (to himself, one hopes) at one of last year's Hammersmith Odeon concerts upon realising that he is actually sharing a room with the man who wrote *Blowin' in the Wind*. It's an honest admission and one which sets a friendly, if sometimes over-familiar, tone for the rest of the journey. One minor quibble: why do Dylan biographers insist on paraphrasing Dylan lyrics in their writing? Could it be that everything that they're saying, he can say it just as good? To quote a phrase.

John Bauldie - the leading Dylan authority on this planet at least - has provided a fascinating bunch of lists for the book's back-end. Each year in Dylan's career is broken down into major events in Bob's calendar, concerts, songs written, songs recorded, TV and radio appearances, press interviews and relevant books and articles. Hence almost by accident, we get a Greatest Hits of Dylan quotations, a tantalising guided tour through a vast catalogue of material (the recent *Bootleg Series* notwithstanding) that still remains unreleased, and an inkling of just how prolific, hard-working and important an artist Dylan is. Curiously, these detailed documents provide more of an insight into "Bob Dylan: the bloke" than the biography that precedes them.

For example, we learn that in March '78 "sneaking out of his Auckland hotel in disguise for a midnight jog, Dylan spots a beautiful Maori princess called Ra Aranga. The silver-tongued devil lost no time in making a move, as Ra recalled, "He looked at me, walked over and said, Hello lady, how about coming with me for a run? I said something like, Push off you scruffy little man. But it seems Ra fell under Dylan's chansmatic spell and Dylan subsequently arranged a romantic rendezvous in Christchurch, where the couple spent "three beautiful days" together".

"Oh No!" could well be the first Dylanography to straddle gnarled veterans and unenlightened novices alike, presenting as it does Bob Dylan: mercurial minstrel; ever-evolving enigma and now saucy old goat. ★★

Adrian Dewey

OH NO! NOT ANOTHER BOB DYLAN BOOK

by Patrick Humphries and John Bauldie
Square One Books, ISBN 1 872747 04 3, £14.95

Yes. And a large format (11.75 in x 8.75 in) softback that weighs in at 2.25 lb. The weight could have been reduced dramatically by excluding much of the clutter in text and notes.

Bauldie's notes are useful if you really want to know exactly what discs were issued in which year; what major concerts the Great Man did; what radio and TV appearances; what important Unreleased Recordings; who interviewed Dylan (my own interview for *Melody Maker*, the first in Britain, goes unmentioned); what songs he wrote... then you'll find the answers in 70 pages (about half the book in terms of words). It's often hard to find references to a specific event unless you know the year. An index is just about essential in a work of this kind.

Humphries's fourteen chapters would be more easily intelligible if you had read 49 other books on Dylan, many of which are written in English that's a lot plainer than Humphries's

Oh no, not another book about me...



florid prose. Most of the text is overwritten (to put it kindly). And the writer is something of a pontificator. You think I jest? Consider this: "In the immediate post-war years, Europe reeled like a famished refugee, aimlessly and blindly groping for some restoration of order, for some semblance of life which recalled the old ways, before the continent was devoured by the salivating foulness of Hitler and his regime."

And what about this? "Songs were bursting out of Dylan... Such publicity meant that not all could hit the high standards of folk poetry and unerring disquiet of his best works." And writing of the release of *Blood On The Tracks*: "Whingeing self-pity has little place in art, but reasoned examination of personal failure and defeat is another thing entirely. Songs about redemption and salvation were here in abundance; that Dylan felt able to commit them to record is a key to his eternal popularity. In the face of enough negative criticism to lay low the most dedicated professional, he stood bloody but unbowed."

Humphries writes in a way that (for me at least) causes the attention to wander. He introduces too many irrelevances - usually comparisons and contrasts with other artists (not necessarily musicians or songwriters) - that often seem like padding.

Above all, the book offers few insight. After reading it, and then re-reading some sections two or three times, I don't feel I know a lot about Dylan that isn't superficial, even shallow. What else can I say? Oh no! Not another Bob Dylan book...

Eric Winter

HIS BACK PAGES

DYLAN - BEHIND THE SHADES: Clinton Heylin (Wiking £16.99)
OH NO! NOT ANOTHER BOB DYLAN BOOK: Patrick Humphries and John Bauldie (Square One £14.95)
HOW MANY tomes must a fan wade through before it becomes clear just how potentially lucrative Dylan's half-century celebrations are for publishers everywhere? Four, at last count, but two of these are paperback reprints: Paul Williams' well-regarded early-years study, *Bob Dylan - Performing Artist (Xanadu £7.99)* and the comprehensive anthology of essays, *The Dylan Companion (Papermac £10.99)*. But both Heylin and Humphries have compiled spanking new, bang-up-to-date biogs.

Heylin's weighty volume is targeted at the trainspotter Bob-bore in all of us, 500 pages of ruthlessly researched and academically annotated anecdotes threaded together with sombre reverence. Although clearly a labour of love, the author dissects his subject with no more affection than if he were describing the mating cycles of squid, so careful is he to maintain detached authority and lend undeserved gravitas to even the shoddiest dregs of Dylan's output.

Indeed, Heylin only reveals his humanity in negative ways with constant self-congratulatory claims that his is "considerably fairer and more accurate than previous Dylan biographies". He even wastes space pithily correcting the inaccuracies of other writers, indignantly insisting that Bob *did* have a soundcheck before this gig and *didn't* perform a certain song on that tour. Earth-shattering revelations, Clint.

Humphries knows such lofty ambitions are unattainable, consequently turning in a shamelessly partial but highly readable fan's-eye overview of Dylan's career. The title - just the right side of apologetically self-conscious - says it all while the authoritative text gushes, giggles and plots the wider cultural perspective of a performer - "somewhere between Elvis Presley and Mahatma Gandhi."

Of course there is shameless exaggeration ("to imagine rock without Dylan is like trying to visualise the Sistine Chapel without a roof"), but Humphries is not afraid of finger-pointing frankness concerning Bob's duff albums and dumb statements. A convincing case is built for the singer's oft-overlooked sense of humour, while playful post-modernist games (like three alternative endings) keep a well-worn subject fresh.

The accessible, picture-packed format makes *Oh No!* an entertaining read for the uninitiated Bobophiles while *Behind The Shades* remains a dry doorstop

Stephen Dalton

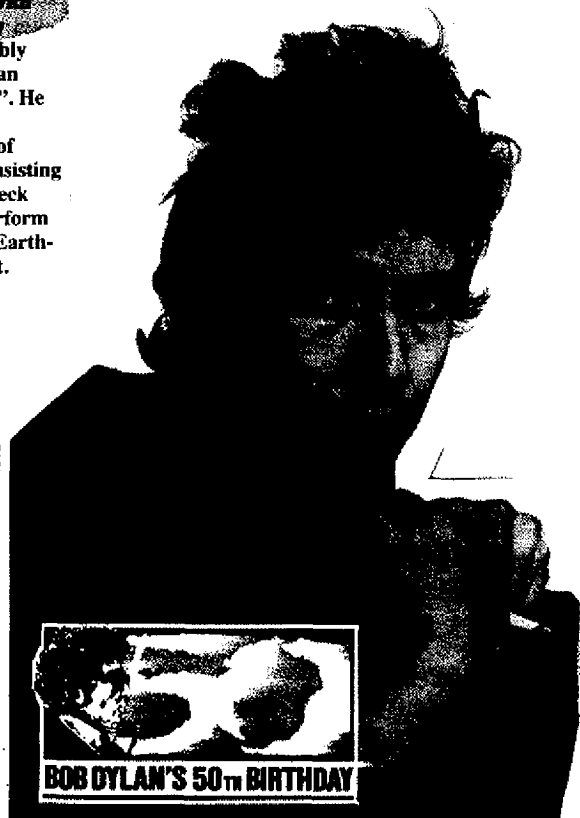
COMPETITION

THOSE GENEROUS people at Square One publishing have supplied us with ten copies of *Oh No! Not Another Bob Dylan Book* for our readers to win.

All you need to do is answer the following question: HOW MANY ROADS MUST A MAN WALK DOWN?

Write your witty, philosophical replies on a postcard and send it to DYLAN COMPO c/o Stephen Dalton, NME, 25th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS.

PICTURE FEATURES



BOB DYLAN'S 50th BIRTHDAY

Oh no! Not another Bob Dylan pic!

SINGER SNARES RIGHTS TO DRUMMER'S STORY

A New Dylan Project? That's Rich

LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES

BOB DYLAN WANTS to make a movie about a musician, but it's not Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams or any of the other folk, country or rock figures associated with him. The musician whose story Dylan wants to see on the screen: the late jazz drummer Buddy Rich.

"Ever see Buddy Rich?" Dylan asked during a recent interview. "To me, he was the essence of rhythm — and he [led] an interesting life, a kind of a 'Raging Bull' character. A lot of people couldn't understand him. . . a lot were put off by his strong personality."

Rich, who was 69 when he died in 1987 after suffering a seizure while recuperating from brain surgery, was known both for his brilliant drumming and for his volatile, prodigious and cocky personality.

A child prodigy, he made his debut in his parents'

vaudeville act by singing, dancing and playing the drums. By the time he was 6, he had taken over the act and was known as "Baby Traps." He later toured with the Artie Shaw and Tommy Dorsey bands before forming the first of his many bands after World War II. Frank Sinatra was one of his biggest boosters.

No, Dylan's not thinking about playing Rich — or even acting in the film. He has obtained the rights to Mel Tormé's recent, critically acclaimed biography — "Traps the Drum Wonder: The Life of Buddy Rich" — and would serve as executive producer of the film.

"It's an exciting movie to make because here's someone who was beating out drummers who were in their 20s and 30s when he was 2 years old," he added. "You've also got a story that [stretches] through the '20s, '30s, '40s, '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s. My objective is just to see that it is done properly. Someone's already working on an outline and a script, so all that needs to be done is get the money for it." / ■

THE ANTI-DYLAN LEAGUE

B O'DONNELL'S ANGUISHED LETTER in defence of the lightweight, ordinary —though entertaining—Tom Petty (VOX 15) was sadly misguided. The point is that he is simply not comparing like with like. Yes, Bob Dylan has not produced an album of sustained excellence for many years —including the curiously titled *Ob Mercy*. And yes, Dylan is maddeningly 'idiosyncratic'. His status as a Traveling Wilbury is risible.

Yet as one of rock's handful of authentic genuines Dylan is deserving of something far better than (VOX's Dylan biographer) Patrick Humphries, who lectured Radio One listeners

about 'great rock poetry', and bizarrely lumped in Dylan with a motley crew of his 'acknowledged heirs'—dull and worthy mediocrities like Donovan, Tracy Chapman, Suzanne Vega, Michelle Shocked, Billy Bragg, Mark Knopfler and—I kid you not—Sting!

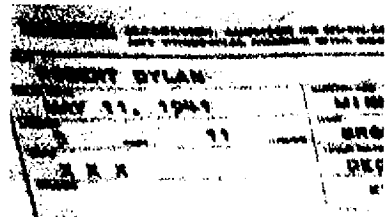
It's a dirty rotten shame. B O'Donnell should listen to 'Blind Willie McTell' as one of Dylan's 'best efforts of late'. Patrick Humphries could mention 'She's Your Lover Now' as an example of 'great rock poetry' the next time he's on radio. Meanwhile, is there a conspiracy going on? *Percy Bysshe Shelley: Protestant Cemetery, Rome*

*** BOB DYLAN made a rare US TV appearance recently when he turned up on the Chabad television to raise money for a drug treatment programme run by orthodox Hasidic Jews. This is Dylan's third appearance on the television, but the first in which he deigned to speak. Wearing a black shirt and jeans, a blue hooded windcheater and a traditional Jewish yarmulke (skullcap), Dylan told viewers: "Give plenty of money to Chabad. It's my favourite organisation in the whole world, really. They do nothing but good things with all the money, and the more you can give, the more it's gonna help. He later performed with Country music joker Kinky Friedman, formerly of The Texas Jewboys, but opted out of dancing the traditional hora with Rabbi Shlomo Cunin and actor Jon Voight at the news that the television had raised \$5.5 million.**

? All biographies of Bob Dylan give his birthdate as May 24, 1941. But on the back of the booklet in the recently released *Bootleg Series*, there is a photograph which includes his immigration card, with his birthdate — May 11, 1941. Which is right — and why is somebody getting it wrong? *Eoin O'Malley, Dublin, Eire*

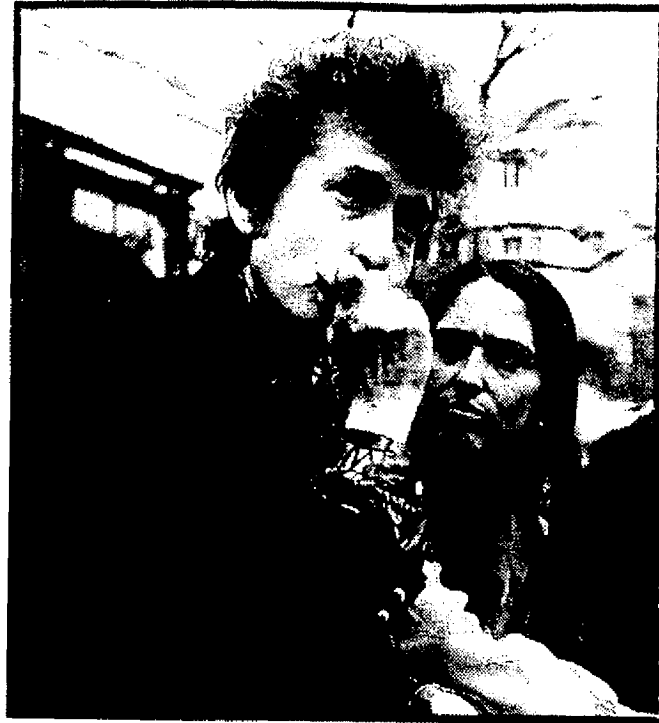
Photographed by Morgan Renard in 1978, the same immigration card shows Dylan's height to be a breathtakingly generous five feet 11 inches. The chances are, therefore, that the May 11 birthday given on the same card is also wrong. His birth certificate — of which there has been hitherto no suspicion of falsification — has the diminutive genius (named Robert Allen Zimmerman) squawking his first at 9.05 p.m., May 24, 1941, in Duluth, Minnesota. Such bureaucratic evidence has not prevented the adult Dylan from claiming that no one knows his real birthdate, and has frequently

(Below) Bob Dylan's 1978 passport with the suspiciously early birthdate. (Above) 1978 UK immigration card, completed in Dylan's own handwriting with accepted d.o.b. confirmed.



in the past gone to pains to confound the efforts of those who seek to pin him down — including, perhaps, astrologers who, basing their calculations on the May 24 date, have observed a particularly unusual "triple Gemini" conjunction in his chart. Jeff Rosen, compiler and producer of The *Bootleg Series*, would only utter an amused but definite "no comment" to The Man In The Know's enquiry, while Dylan's publicist, Elliot Mintz, promises to pop the question to the pint-sized seer when the propitious moment arises. Watch this space.

"The present now will later be past": His Young Bobness and then-paramour Joan Baez in '65 savouring those few final moments of pre-gift-giving bliss.



His Royal Bobness and raven-haired rumpy pumptress Joan Baez prepare for Sound Of The Sixties

YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE!

Bob Dylan's "thoughtful" gifts to Joan Baez, Christmas '64

Compiled by Marcus Gray from Teen Scrapbook '65

- 1 A strangely shaped green rock discovered while hitching through Colorado
- 2 An old Duncan yo-yo
- 3 An autoharp bought from a woman in Maine
- 4 A pogo stick
- 5 Three Batman comics
- 6 Garcia Lorca's Gypsy Ballads
- 7 Bedbug Blues, by Blind Lemon Jefferson
- 8 An old chewing tobacco tin
- 9 A coonskin cap
- 10 A specially-composed song, I Hate Christmas, But I Love Halloween



Grunt! Grunt! Grunt!



Early setbacks...



"Bad news Bob - they're protesting at us, not with us!"

Bob Dylan ate my ELVIS!



another
ANGST
shocker!



BOB DYLAN'S 50TH BIRTHDAY

Singles and EPs

Mar 1965	The Times They Are A-Changin' / Honey Just Allow Me One More Chance	CBS 201751
Apr 1965	Subterranean Homesick Blues / She Belongs To Me	CBS 201753
Apr 1965	With God On Our Side / I'm A Man (with Joan Baez) plus tracks by others	Fontana TFE 18099
Apr 1965	Ye Playboys And Playgirls (with Pete Seeger) plus tracks by others	Fontana TFE 18011
Jun 1965	Magpie's Farm / On The Road Again	CBS 201781
Aug 1965	Like A Rolling Stone / Gates Of Eden	CBS 201811
Oct 1965	Positively 4th Street / From A Buck Six	CBS 201824
Jan 1966	Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window / Highway 61 Revisited	CBS 201900
Apr 1966	(Spoonie Or Later) One Of Us Must Know / Queen Jane Approximately	CBS 202053
Apr 1966	One Too Many Mornings / Spanish Harlem Incident / Oxford Town / It Ain't Me Babe / She Belongs To Me	CBS EP 6070
May 1966	Rainy Day Women Nos 12 & 35 / Pledging My Time	CBS 202307
Jul 1966	I Want You / Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues (live)	CBS 202258
Oct 1966	Mr Tambourine Man / Subterranean Homesick Blues / It's All Over Now / Baby Blue	CBS EP 6078
May 1967	Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat / Most Likely You'll Go Your Way And I'll Go Mine	CBS 2780
May 1969	I Threw It All Away / The Drifter's Escape	CBS 4219
Sep 1969	Lay Lady Lay / Peggy Day	CBS 4434
Dec 1969	Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You / Country Pie	CBS 4611
Jul 1970	Wayworn / Copper Kettle (The Pale Mountain)	CBS 5122
Mar 1971	It's Not For You / New Morning	CBS 7092
Jun 1971	Watching The River Flow / Spanish Is The Loving Tongue	CBS 7329
Dec 1971	George Jackson (acoustic) / George Jackson (big band version)	CBS 7688
Mar 1973	Just Like A Woman / I Want You	CBS 1158
Sep 1973	Knockin' On Heaven's Door / Turkey Chase	CBS 1782
Jan 1974	A Fool Such As I / Lily Of The West	CBS 2006
Feb 1974	On A Night Like This / Forever Young	Island WIP 6168
Feb 1975	Tangled Up In Blue / If You See Her Say Hello	CBS 3160
Oct 1975	Million-Dollar Bash / Tears Of Rage	CBS 3665
Jan 1976	Hurricane Pt 1 / Hurricane (full version)	CBS 3878
Feb 1976	Lay Lady Lay / I Threw It All Away	CBS 3995
Apr 1976	Mozambique / Oh Sister	CBS 4113
Feb 1977	Rita May / Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again	CBS 4859
Jul 1978	Baby Slop / Crying / New Pony	CBS 6499
Oct 1978	Is Your Love In Vain / We Better Talk This Over	CBS 6718
Dec 1978	same titles on 12" CBS 126718	
Dec 1978	Changing Of The Guards / Senor	CBS 6936
Feb 1979	Lay Lady Lay / I Threw It All Away	CBS 7071
Jun 1979	Forever Young / All Along The Watchtower / I Want You	CBS 7473
Aug 1979	Precious Angel / Trouble In Mind	CBS 7828
Oct 1979	Man Gave Names To All The Animals / When He Returns	CBS 7970
Jan 1980	Gotta Serve Somebody / Gonna Change My Way Of Thinkin'	CBS 8134
Jun 1980	Saved / Are You Ready	CBS 8743
Jul 1981	Heart Of Mine / Let It Be Me	CBS A1406
Sep 1981	Lenny Bruce / Dead Man, Dead Man	CBS A1460
Oct 1983	Union Sundown / I & I	CBS A3616
Dec 1983	Jokerman / Licence To Kill	CBS A4055
Jan 1985	Highway 61 Revisited / It Ain't Me Babe	CBS A6020
Jun 1985	Tight Connection To My Heart / We Better Talk This Over	CBS A6303
Aug 1985	When The Night Comes Falling From The Sky / Dark Eyes	CBS A6469
Aug 1986	Band Of The Hand (with the Heartbreakers) / Theme From Joe's Death	MCA 1076
Oct 1986	same titles on 12" MCAT 1076	
Oct 1986	The Usual / Got My Mind Made Up	CBS 651148 7
Oct 1986	The Usual / Got My Mind Made Up / They Killed Him 12"	CBS 651148 6
Jul 1988	Silver / When Did You Leave Heaven	CBS 651408 7
Jul 1988	Silver / When Did You Leave Heaven / Driftin' Too Far From Shore 12"	CBS 651406 6
Oct 1989	Everything Is Broken / Death Is Not The End	CBS 655358 7
Oct 1989	Everything Is Broken / Dead Man Dead / Man I Want You (live) 12"	CBS 655358 6
Oct 1989	same tracks on 12" 655358 B replete with print	
Oct 1989	Everything Is Broken / Where The Teardrops Fall / Dead Man Dead / Man I Want You / Girl In The World CD	CBS 655358 2

UK DISCOGRAPHY

It's that time of year again. And there on the table is a baby blue birthday cake with 50 candles blowin' in the wind. Yet it seems only yesterday that Pa and Ma Zimmerman were in St Mary's Hospital, Duluth, celebrating the arrival of their 7lb 13oz kidlet. Actually it was May 24, 1941, and Pearl Harbour hadn't even become a scrap metal yard. But nobody cared much about the event at that particular point in musical history. Come to think of it, the lad hardly got a mention 'til 1961, when he turned up as the harmonica player on a Harry Belafonte session. Since then he's been everywhere - Woody Guthrie's bedside, the Isle Of Wight, Joan Baez's front room, London's Pindar Of Wakefield pub, a hospital ward reserved for inept motorcyclists, lotsa interesting places.

He's also been quite a few people, predominantly one Bob Dylan, but also Bob Landy, Blind Boy Grunt, Tedham Porterhouse, Robert Milkwood Thomas, George Smiley, Big Joe's Buddy, Elmer Johnson and Lefty Wilbury. And being lots of people he's been able to play on more sessions than most. Ask Earl Scruggs, David Blue, Kurtis Blow, Johnny Cash, Sly & Robbie, Leonard Cohen, Carolyn Hester, David Bromberg, Roger McGuinn, Doug Sahm, Eric Clapton, The Band, Blues Project, Barry Goldberg, George Harrison, Al Kooper, Keith Green, Will Powers, Warren Zevon and those fellow Wilburys, all of whom have had the Zim decorate their albums. So this isn't the Dylan discography to end all discographies. There's simply not enough room in the paper. But there's enough here to celebrate that magnificent half century. Cheers, Bobby, whoever you are!



FRED FACT

Blind Boy Grunt - a shade inspirational

Jan 1990	Political World / Ring Them Bells / Silver / All Along The Watchtower (live) 12"	CBS 65543 6
Dec 1972	Bob Dylan - More Greatest Hits	CBS 67239*
Jan 1972	The Concert For Bangladesh - live tracks	Apple STCX 3385
Sep 1990	Unbelievable! / 10,000 Men	CBS 656304 7
Mar 1972	A Tribute To Woody Guthrie Part One - three tracks	CBS 64881
Sep 1990	Unbelievable! / 10,000 Men / The Summer / Jackman CD	CBS 656304 2
Oct 1973	Pat Garrett And Billy The Kid - soundtrack	CBS 69042*
Feb 1991	Political World / Caribbean Wind / You're A Big Girl Now / It's All Over Now / Baby Blue CD	CBS 655643 5
Nov 1973	Dylan	CBS 69049*
1991	Series Of Dreams / Seven Curses	CBS 656707 7
Nov 1973	CD reissue is titled Bob Dylan - A Fool Such As I	
1991	Series Of Dreams / Seven Curses / Tangled Up In Blue / Like A Rolling Stone CD	CBS 656707 5
Jan 1974	Planet Waves	Island ILPS 9261
Jun 1974	Before The Flood	Island 1080 1*
Nov 1974	Stood On The Tracks	CBS 69097*
Jun 1974	reissued on CBS 22137 (Sep 1982)*	
Nov 1974	Stood On The Tracks	CBS 69097*
Aug 1975	The Basement Tapes	CBS 38147*
Dec 1975	Desire	CBS 86003
Aug 1976	reissued on 32570 (Apr 1985)*	
Sep 1976	Hard Rain	CBS 38016*
Apr 1978	The Last Waltz - live tracks	Warner Bros K66076
Jun 1978	Street Legal	CBS 86067*
May 1979	Live At The Budokan	CBS 98004*
Aug 1979	Slow Train Coming	CBS 86095*
Jun 1980	Saved	CBS 86113
Aug 1981	Shot Of Love	CBS 85178*
Nov 1983	Infidels	CBS 25539
Dec 1984	reissued on 4507271 (Dec 1989)*	
Dec 1984	Real Live	CBS 26334*
Jun 1985	Empire Burlesque	CBS 36313*
Nov 1985	Biograph	CBS 66509*
Jul 1987	Knocked Out Loaded	CBS 86326*
Oct 1987	Hearts Of Fire - soundtrack (3 tracks)	CBS 460 0011*
Dec 1987	1965 Press Conference picture disc	Tales HIGHWAY 61
Jan 1988	Down In The Groove	CBS 460 2671*
Feb 1989	Dylan And The Dead	CBS 4633011*
Jul 1989	Desire / Blood On The Tracks CD only	CBS CD8D 241
Sep 1989	Oh Mercy	CBS 4654001*
Sep 1990	Under The Red Sky	CBS 4871801*
Apr 1991	The Bootleg Series Vols 1-3	Columbia 4680961*

Albums

Jun 1962	Bob Dylan	CBS (S) 62822*
Nov 1963	The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan	CBS (S) 62193*
May 1964	The Times They Are A-Changin'	CBS (S) 62251*
Nov 1964	Another Side Of Bob Dylan	CBS (S) 62429*
Mar 1965	Newport Broadside (one track with Pete Seeger, one with Joan Baez)	Fontana TPL 6038
Mar 1965	Evening Concerts At Newport Vol. 1 some tracks only	Fontana TFL 6641
May 1965	The various Dylan at Newport tracks also turned up on two tape-only releases Best Of Newport Vols 1 & 2 (Vanguard ZCVS 91027 and ZCVS 91030) during 1975	
May 1965	Bringing It All Back Home	CBS (S) 62515*
Sep 1965	Highway 61 Revisited	CBS (S) 66012
Aug 1966	Blonde On Blonde	CBS (S) 63801*
Dec 1966	reissued on CBS 22130 (May 1982)	
Dec 1966	Bob Dylan - Greatest Hits	CBS (S) 62847
Feb 1968	John Wesley Harding	CBS (S) 63252
May 1969	reissued on 4633591 (Dec 1989)	
May 1969	Nashville Skyline	CBS (S) 63601
Jul 1970	Self Portrait	CBS 62250*
Nov 1970	New Morning	CBS 69001
Nov 1970	reissued on 4032267 (Sep 1983)	

He's an artist, he don't look back

The sad thing about hilarity is that it is wasted on the earnest. I keep waiting for the laughter to swell around the contemporary figure of Bob Dylan and, having swollen, to blot out all competing sounds in the manner of a harmonica break taking flight in the wrong key. It never seems to happen, although more improbable things have come to pass; his fiftieth birthday, for example.

I suppose I will get into awful trouble with his admirers for several of the things I am about to say. But I can console myself with the knowledge that I am only following his lead; he has been getting himself into a rare old mess with his fans these past 30 years. The more ardent his fans, the more intolerant they have often proved, which is funny in itself.

The comedy of his phenomenon is not new, simply more advanced. It is, therefore, a mature comedy; but because of his enormous influence, not to mention the special place that he still occupies in so many pasts, few people find it amusing. Or if they do, they are not letting on. To do so would be to ridicule the process of their worship.

Here is a man who has, quite simply, written the most ambitious, complex and poetic popular songs in the English language. I know I will have to defend that statement, although I must say that I do not find it remotely contentious. The important thing is that he raised, almost single-handedly, the lyric from junior partner in the words-and-music scheme of things to a position of undreamt-of primacy. How he achieved this continues to be a matter of study in the books and university theses produced relentlessly on his art. Put at its briefest, it has to do with the fact that a writer of such profligate talent and solid virtues should have chosen "pop music" as his form of expression, and that it, in turn, should have responded positively to the revolution that he set in train. Whatever the small print of that explanation, the fact remains that nobody in the business has consistently produced stanzas of such sophistication.

So far, so serious. It is when you now see him lay waste to all those anthems that the comedy of chaos and self-parody begins. On the evidence of his recent performances, the programme of destruction now follows some, or all, of these principles: it is vital that as few words as possible shall be understood; when they threaten to become coherent, the song is to be shorn of enough verses to make it a travesty of the original; the tune is to make only the barest accommodation with the chord shifts; wherever possible old cadences are to be bulldozed into monotonous, and familiar refrains cluster-bombed into jagged rubble; at no time should all the instruments be fully in tune, and the band should sound like a kitchen in crisis. It is when I hear all that articulation, all those images, sprung rhythms, internal rhyme schemes, all made incomprehensible to the point of absence, that I glance round to see if anyone else is finding it

At 50, Bob Dylan is past his buy-by date — or is he merely biding his precious time?

Alan Franks analyses pop's premier poet



Bringing it all back home: Dylan (left) in Woodstock, New York, in 1968, and (above) on-stage and electrified and still outraging the folk purists



Freewheelin': Dylan (above) in London in 1962 and (right) with Joan Baez, who inspired "Visions of Joanna" and other love songs



amusing. It is as though, at 50, having spent so much passion against so much pretence, he has turned iconoclast on his own material. It is, in every sense, a frightful hoot, and I would not be surprised if he thought so, too.

The result is that, unless you are familiar with the backlog, you have no idea what he is doing. Even if you do have that familiarity, it is still thoroughly perplexing, and the delivery such a slur that you have to wait for it to pass through what seems to be an appropriate note. The slow ballads are not spared; to the carefully made Jacques Brel-like song "Simple Twist of Fate", he applies the same anarchy. The guitar dangles from his neck like an absurd medallion, he weeds at a keyboard with his right hand before giving it up as a bad job, the harmonica harness slips out of true, and he yowls out some noise that could be a police siren. If this were a complete unknown on a first tour, you could be pretty certain he would not be troubling you again.

Amid all this I suddenly remember my best friend's father in 1966. He was a rather donnish and gentle man, and he probably knew as much as anyone ever will about the novels of Thomas Love Peacock. Still, he would always muster a civilised opinion on items of his children's culture, even if he was being fed such items under duress. He stood in the drawing-room, looking at the waif-like figure on the record sleeve, and, bracing his

tolerant ears, said: "He looks like a Dickens crossing sweeper and sounds like a sheep in pain." It was not quite the condemnation it seemed, for he went on to debate the claim (his, as it happened) that the young man in question was "the Noël Coward of his generation". As I remember that occasion, I think he had a point.

Back in the Hammersmith Odeon, or any of the other, lesser, auditoriums where he now performs, it is not the Dickens crossing sweeper who comes to mind, for Dylan looks too well fed, too jacketed for that. Nor is it Coward; the satire is not overt, and the rock star's enunciation would have moved the Master to expletives. No, it is Mrs Miller, the howlingly funny American "singer" who used to take well known pop ballads and then perform them with a studied neglect of tune and tempo against a perfectly presentable backing. It became hard to know whether she could sing, but had chosen to do something else, or whether she could not sing but had been mischievously persuaded that she could. Coward said of himself that he couldn't sing but knew how to; Dylan gives the impression of one who knew how to but has decided not to. In the direst moments, the laugh is no more on him than on the people who

deny the evidence of their ears and revere him as though he were singing with all the old angry splendour.

I sometimes wonder what it is that we are now watching and hoping to applaud; the mere echoes of a once massive influence on popular culture, or the husk of a firework which just might manage another flare if the wind shifts suddenly. The irony is that even as the live work becomes more patchy, puzzling and ill-received, so he seems to step up his touring rate. There is really no need for a man of 50 in his position to be doing this, only compulsion; unless, that is, he really is diminishing into just another of those Sixties and Seventies stars whose lot is to wander the earth pursuing the tail of their reputation.

Or unless, like Miles Davis, his nearest counterpart in the jazz sector, he has simply mislaid his self-editing equipment.

In the United States his record sales have been declining steadily since *Desire*, surprisingly his first million-selling album, in 1976. Over here, only one of the albums of recent years, *Oh Mercy*, has passed the 300,000 mark. Occasionally he sneaks into the news for some inconsequential reason, or because he has been spotted like a mock-lobo at the door of a tour hotel; then the tabloids, uncomprehending from the start, will dust down the old headlines which play with times a-changin' and wind blowin', and lumber the unrecognisable hero with the prefix of protest-singer. That, I suppose, also has to be considered funny after a fashion, but it is still not a patch on what he can manage. Only last October he performed at, of all places, the West Point military academy, leading the nation's future army commanders in a selection of the great standards. Singalongabobby. Perhaps the cadets never caught up with 1983's "Licence to Kill", a diamond of a song about the patriot-as-narcissist, or with all the deep pacifism that ran like a seam through the turbulent ground of his best Christian lyrics. And perhaps, in keeping with the very matter of the song, they were able to press-gang "God on Our Side" into the service of their morality. But what casuistry could have spared them from the sights of "Masters of War", still pristine in its juvenile rage? Surely their fathers had warned them about that one? Or had something happened to the fathers?

It was in the youth of those West Point fathers that he first made a name for himself in the burgeoning folk music scene of New York. The story has been told ad nauseam, but its essence is this. Country boy comes to town from Hibbing, Minnesota. He has a head full of words, a precocious arrogance, a voice like the bottom of a birdcage, and a fierce crush on every type of American vernacular music from the old blues masters, through the socialist ballads of Woody Guthrie, to the rhythm and blues of Little Richard and Chuck Berry. He positively feeds off the rejection of conventional folk-fanciers, and within the next five years he has altered the rules of engagement between a songwriter and his raw material.

He was as thorough in his rule-breaking as

was Muhammad Ali, his immediate contemporary in a different offensive. In fact, there was an extraordinary similarity between their early careers, although to detail the parallels would be to digress too much. The crucial point was that, like many great practitioners, they managed to discard chunks of orthodoxy while somehow having a colossal knowledge of, and respect for, the traditions in which they could not help but operate. In Dylan's case, this meant loading lines into verses so that the structure groaned but always held, taking the licence of assonance to its limits and beyond, setting disparate images in pursuit of one another until the chase seemed to have a life of its own. Occasionally, usually when his writing mood was austere and biblical, as in *John Wesley Harding*, the songs were masterpieces of compression and paraphrasing, although the greatest of the lyrics were rapacious for space. Most famously he outraged the acoustic reactionaries by introducing an electric backing group in 1965. From this distance, that anger looks quaintly archaic.

As recently as 1989, on *Oh Mercy*, there were signs that he could still write with the same intensity. Yet there remains the feeling that the conversion to Christianity in 1979 replaced agony with certainty, doubt with evangelism, and that the songs, ironically, shed some of the old power. Wherever he goes from here, it seems improbable that he will surpass the work of his middle period. There stands a whole range of towering songs from the Seventies which flash across like novels as the characters, like their creator, duck in and out of the American nightmare. There is a kind of alternative national anthem called "Idiot Wind", in which an argument with a woman broadens through outrageous metaphor into a hate song for a whole nation; there is "Tangled Up in Blue", the portrait of an obsessive relationship that sprawls and yearns its way across America; and, perhaps the finest of all, "The Changing of the Guards", a suitably elusive piece on the pursuit of integrity. These are the most lived-in of all his hundreds of songs, and the life that struggles from the lines might have been the very stuff of an Arthur Miller lead role. As lyrics go, not even Porter, Gershwin, Coward, Novello or Sondheim, for all their glories, are in the same weight division.

It may still seem incongruous, even funny, when the cumbersome machines of lit crit are wheeled up to the writings of a mere rock star; when essays are published with themes such as God, Mode and Meaning (and this in England, not America), and musicologists analyse the functions of his inner key tensions. Yet that is the heart of the matter; in another life, he might have been a plain old poet, unsung or otherwise, or a Ginsberg figure, or a would-be Kerouac. Instead, it was the culture of that music, at that time, that enabled his peculiar talents to take fire from each other. Never mind the mixed blessings of his imitators, it was he who ensured that from then on no subject, however daunting, and no emotion, however complex, was beyond the legitimate reach of music with a mass appeal.

Strange to relate, I see no pathos in his present situation, but only an end to what has preceded it, and the consistency of an artist who establishes a stylistic position in order to then abandon it. At the moment it may make for a kind of Dada-ism, but his record is too protean to assume that he will leave it at that. If we insist on making that prognosis, we are also being consistent, for he has been written off almost as frequently as he has been written about. It nearly happened again here. His critics' determination to constantly repeat old errors might be as funny as any other aspect of the matter, except that it has become so predictable. ●



DAVID GAHR

He had a lot of nerve: So much younger, 1965

MUSIC

Notes From Underground

Dylan's legal 'bootlegs'

At least since 1969, Bob Dylan's officially released albums have been shadowed by a legendary counter-canon: outtakes, demos, home and concert performances, bootlegged under such titles as "Great White Wonder." *The Bootleg Series, Volumes 1-3*, which hit stores last week, isn't Columbia's first attempt to cash in on the cachet. "The Basement Tapes" (1975) were low-fi (and much overrated) 1967 home recordings with The Band. The "Biograph" anthology (1985) supplemented the classics with 18 previously unreleased cuts: mostly variants of known songs, but also such rarities as the countryish "Caribbean Wind" and the 1965 Beaties-Stones knockoff "I Wanna Be Your Lover."

Despite its naughty-naughty title and its rough edges—an out-of-tune guitar, a barking dog in the background—"The Bootleg Series" is closer in spirit to "Biograph" than to "The Basement Tapes." It traces Dylan's songwriting from 1961 to 1989, though this time with minimal reference to the work that made him famous. No "Blowin' in the Wind," no "Mr. Tambourine Man," and only one verse of "Like a Rolling Stone." Its 58 outtakes and oddities include 38 songs he'd never put on an album.

Fans perplexed by recent Dylan records will be relieved: this one takes no getting used to. The chronological presentation, from guitar-harmonica days through mid-'60s rock and roll and so on, prepares leery listeners for the off-putting '80s. The last dozen of these tracks would make a far stronger album than such cranky collections as "Knocked Out Loaded" (1986) and "Down in the Groove" (1988). The earliest is from 1979, the year he turned publicly Christian; most are pre-"Biograph." Yet he's released just three of these songs in any version. Dylan, apparently, has done little better than the rest of us at making sense of his late work.

But a too-discerning inner critic might have inhibited Dylan while he was doing the most daring work in the history of popular music. "It's always been my nature to take chances," Dylan sings in "Angelina" (1981), an extraordinary outtake from "Shot of Love." It's usually paid off. What songwriter was ever better at sketching characters and capturing voices? "It's too bad for his wife and kids he's dead," says the prizefight manager in "Who Killed Davey Moore?" (1963). "But if he was sick he shoulda said." And as a singer, Dylan was always in full control: "Quit Your Low Down Ways" (1962) shows his distinctive knack for fusing manic energy and self-deprecating wit.

The unfamiliar versions of well-known middle-period songs—a solo "Subterranean Homesick Blues," a fragmentary "Like a Rolling Stone" in waltz time—are less revelatory than the unknown late songs. The bluesy "Lord Protect My Child" (1983) prays on behalf of anxious parents in a sinful world. The ominous "Foot of Pride" (1983) castigates the sin that leads the pious to "sing 'Amazing Grace' all the way to the Swiss banks." The minor-key meditation "Blind Willie McTell" encompasses singing, the South and (what else?) sin. And "Angelina," a seven-minute surrealist dirge, features a god with the head of a hyena (rhymes with "Angelina") and a trip up "spiral staircases/past the tree of smoke, past the angel with four faces."

Does it seem a long way from Davey Moore's cigar-puffing manager to these apocalyptic creatures? But Dylan—as prophet, poet or just topical songwriter—has always been a moralist. It's sometimes hard to remember that this powerful set is really only a marginal gloss on his canonical recordings. For anyone else, "The Bootleg Series" would be "The Best of."

DAVID GATES

Kings of the strings

Pete Clark at a gathering of the world's guitar legends

IT HAD to happen. In the last 30 years rock music's tousled head has been swelling with self-importance.

And now some gnarled guitar pickers have got together and voted themselves legendary. Roll over Ulysses, and make some room for Brian May of Queen.

Guitar Legends took place in Seville over five nights last week on a building site which will eventually be transformed into Expo 92. The stadium was an oasis of white marble and giant cut-out palm trees. Equally puzzling was the backdrop — a study of dog biscuits.

Shambolic

But then, this is rock and roll, a garish mongrel which loves to disport itself in strange settings. Each night featured loose groupings of players backed by top supporting musicians. This was muso-heaven, a place to trade licks and grins, a chance to admire each other's guitar straps.

The five shows covered a large area of rock's rich tapestry, from blues and R & B through to fusion and metal. It would be churlish to carp, although everyone had a favourite guitarist who had been inexplicably overlooked. On the other hand, some of the choices were inspired.

As each performer only had three or four songs nobody could get out of hand with rock music's least loved gift to the world: the 20-minute guitar solo.

If any night captured the essence of the whole event, in all its shambolic glory, that was Thursday.

It started at the sound check, with Keith Richards and Bob Dylan attempting to unravel the intricate chord structure of Shake Rattle and Roll.

Dylan seemed mystified by the presence of a guitar round his neck, as if someone had plonked a bison leg into his arms.

He poked and scratched at it, lending a hearty old rock and

roll song new depths of introspection. Richards, on the other hand, was like a dog with two tails. The pioneering cigarette graft in the corner of his mouth which he has undergone seems to have been a success.

Even without a guitar in his hand, he simply wheezes rock and roll. His sunglasses play better solos than most mortals. In the modern world of dance music and clever machinery, he is an anachronism. But allowed to roam freely on a stage, he picks up the tempo and sends

the pulse racing. In a software world, he is defiantly hardware.

These two members of an endangered species soon found playmates. Joe Cocker, presumably invited to appear as a result of his prowess on the air guitar, was there to bellow defiance at the passing of time.

Prowess

Then there was Jack Bruce, the first bass player to achieve the same rating as a lead guitarist in his time with

Cream. Even in rehearsal his head snapped from side to side at the unbearable rightness of his bass line.

At the performance proper, these valiant old troupers had the Spanish crowd baying with pleasure.

Even when Dylan lost the plot of All Along The Watchtower, the performance still carried enough echoes of both his younger self and Jimi Hendrix for a rapturous finale.

Other nights had their moments. Steve Cropper stepped

forward to perform Dock of The Bay, the song he wrote with Otis Redding.

The Metal Boys closed the proceedings with a terrifying display of trousers and efficiency and Paco de Lucia reminded us that passion does not necessarily mean maximum volume.

Time has only increased the power of these strange rituals when grown men stamp their feet and are magically transformed into young boys. Sometimes it is better when there are strings attached.



AXING LYRICAL: Keith Richards, with mandatory cigarette, and Bob Dylan in Seville

Pictures: KEITH PANNELL

BOB DYLAN'S ALL-STAR BAND SEVILLE, SPAIN

BOB DYLAN stands surrounded by the marbled columns of Seville's intimate La Cartuja Auditorium. Is this living 'legend' perhaps a bit anxious about stepping onto the stage where on previous nights heroes of jazz swung it out and the blues kings added a new vein to the Mississippi? He strolls on, none too sure. Picking up his guitar, Keith Richards lights up a cigarette looking on noticeably unimpressed... but wait, let's not spoil the show...

Easing the well behaved crowd into their £45 seats, was the cool (former) Roxy Music guitarist **Phil Manzanera**. Next out was **Jack Bruce**, (former) bass player for Cream. No messing around, it was straight into Cream's 'Sunshine Of Your Love'.

Then, just as everyone was getting into it all, we were rudely interrupted with some deeply sensitive acoustic picking from Seville's **Vincente Amigo** and South America's **Miguel Bose**. But let's face it, the boys in the Rolling Stones T-shirts were just not interested.

Manzanera returns with **Joe Cocker**, the old familiar horns of 'You Can Leave Your Hat On' blasting. 'Night Calls' and 'Unchain My Heart' follow until the spot shifts. It's some bloke with a

harmonica around his neck. It's Dylan and he's among friends: the welcome was outrageous.

There'd been no need for those earlier reservations, he does his guitar bit with Phil and Jack and then heads for the mic, breaking into 'All Along The Watchtower', before switching to acoustic and 'Boots Of Spanish Leather'. What came next is anybody's guess, a song that had the band baffled, never mind the audience.

Shaking us out of our aural puzzle in strolche **Keith Richards**, looking slightly slept on, but high on form. Close behind him was Stax man **Steve Cropper**. On stage, Bob, Keith, Steve, Jack, Phil, and presiding over them all, looking like a crazed cartoon, maverick percussionist **Ray Cooper**. The plan was for Keith and Bob to take turns

singing 'Shake, Rattle And Roll', but Bob, having thrown numerous tantrums during rehearsals, forgot his words. Keith just smirked.

In sneaked **Robert Cray** for 'Going Down', Bob disappeared... then reappeared with **Dave Edmunds** scurrying close behind. The finale, 'Can't Tum You Loose', saw the stage bursting with history. The crowd was hysterical.

Back on the bus the organisers, journos, radio and TV people were still scratching their heads. What the hell was Bob singing? Someone thought they saw him smile as he left the stage too!

Fiona Austin

Strum enchanted evenings

By LEE JESKE

SEVILLE, Spain — Last week, exactly 499 years after Christopher Columbus, who sailed from these parts, landed in the New World, "Guitar Legends" paraded an extraordinary stream of strummers and pickers across the huge stage of Seville's new Cartuja Auditorium for five nights of rock, pop, blues, jazz and a bit of flamenco.

Why? Because next year, in Columbus' honor, Seville will host the 20th century's last world's fair, Expo '92. Since Seville also gave the world the modern-day guitar, British promoter Tony Hollingsworth smelled the opportunity to stage a modern-day pop music extravaganza.

So the only completed structure in the midst of the Expo construction site featured five fast-moving nights of legends and non-legends, guitarists and non-guitarists — including Bob Dylan, Keith Richards, B.B. King, Robbie Robertson, Les Paul, John McLaughlin, Roger Waters, George Benson, Joe Cocker, Roger McGuinn, Joe Walsh, Brian May, Joe Satriani, Paco de Lucia, Bo Diddley, Phil Manzanera, Bruce Hornsby, Rickie Lee Jones, Albert Collins, Steve Vai, Steve Cropper, Jack Bruce, Robert Cray and Stanley Clarke —

performing for 5,000 Sevillians and untold millions watching on live TV, pay-per-view (a three-hour highlight show ran in the U.S. on Saturday night), and eventual TV specials, videos and albums.

I have discovered the New World of live popular music: It's going to be performed for high-tech TV cameras and digital recording equipment.

When George Benson smiled broadly, he smiled through the crowd and into the cameras, into the world. Somebody yelled at pianist George Duke — directing the jazz night — to "Habla español," but Duke, like everybody else, continued to habla ingles, still the language of pop music and pop culture. Seville was the backdrop, the excuse, but it was the New World of mass media that was being addressed.

"Guitar Legends" was broken into themes: a night each of blues, jazz and hard rock and two nights of aging '60s rock stars. Each headliner did about four numbers (not counting the inevitable all-hands-on-deck finales) in front of more or less one band. This is another whiff of the future: Who needs bands when, under the auspices of a different musical director each night, studio whizzes can be assembled into chameleon bands?

George Duke wisely chose Miles Davis as the glue for the jazz night, and it provided a highlight.

The most eagerly anticipated event was Thursday's teaming of Dylan and Richards, but those two wrinkled warhorses collaborated only on a baton-passing "Shake, Rattle and Roll" between their own odd sets: Dylan whining perversely through four songs (including the creaky Nat Cole hit, "Answer Me, My Love") and Richards wheezing cheerfully through a handful of rock and soul oldies.

Each was on stage for 20 minutes, each left Spain with a rumored high six-figure paycheck. The sustained standing ovations accorded 76-year-old electric guitar innovator Les Paul before and after his trio's lightly swinging set of jazz standards was the week's emotional high point — Seville recognizes a true legend when it sees one — while the tight and dynamic set by Robbie Robertson, in one of his first performances anywhere since the Band split up 15 years ago, was a musical highlight.

Spain's guitar traditions are about flamenco and Segovia, not folk rock and Diddley. But, then again, Columbus wasn't looking for a New World, he was looking for a quick way to India. His motives and the motives of "Guitar Legends" were exactly the same: commerce. In truth, the Old World and the New World have never really been all that far apart.



"There's one part of you that goes, Wow, I'm glad everybody appreciates the work and stuff, and there's another part that goes, Well, that's showbiz, innit?"

Thus spake **Keith Richards** on the eve of his brief and slightly ragged contribution to a series of five all-star shows held last month in Seville, Spain, under the grand banner heading Guitar Legends.

Aside from a reported six-figure fee, what persuaded the legendary Richards to make his first public appearance since the Stones came off the road last year was the offer of a return match with his old Live Aid sparring partner, **Bob Dylan**. "Yeah, that was a bit of a disaster," Richards agreed, recalling the broken strings, shaky harmonies and general acoustic shambles which comprised his, Dylan's and Ronnie Wood's unique contribution to that famous day. "But so what? It was all for a good cause right? If

you don't pick yourself up after falling flat on your face, you'll never get anything done. When Bob said he was gonna do this show and that he wanted to do a song with me, I thought, Fine. And I'm still waiting to find out what it is."

It was, in fact, the old rock'n'roll standard, Shake Rattle And Roll, which efficiently but unexcitingly bridged the gap between Dylan's rather glum four-song solo spot and the more high-spirited show-closing efforts of Keith's spare-time band, **The Xpensive Winos**. Neither of the festival's biggest names, however, were showing vintage form that night. Richards and co looked frisky enough but still need a vocalist. Dylan, a deep quizzical frown permanently etched across his face, got off to a rickety start with All Along The Watchtower and mumbled his way through the less well-known acoustic numbers (Boots Of Spanish Leather, Borderline, Answer Me) that followed. And **Richard Thompson** — another Legend who Dylan co-opted on stage to help him out — claimed not even to know the names of two of the songs he gamely picked his way through. "The rehearsal involved Dylan running through about half a dozen songs backstage before we went on. They were all in the same key and he never said what they were called or which ones he was actually going to do. But then, he's Bob Dylan. He can do what he likes."

IT WAS AN unlikely event in an unlikely setting, but for five days last month, Seville, Spain, forgot flamenco and focused on rock guitar, and the result was unlike anything the world has ever seen or heard. "Guitar Legends" was sponsored by Seville's Expo '92 arts festival and Gibson Guitars and gave the stage to virtually every six-string virtuoso extant, some 32 in all. The event was both a kickoff for Expo '92 and a way to peddle a lot of worldwide TV rights (a three-hour version aired in the U.S. on pay-per-view).

Bringing together music's finest—including Larry Coryell, Robert Cray, Steve Cropper, Bo Diddley, Dave Edmunds, B.B. King, Les Paul, Robbie Robertson, Richard Thompson, and Steve Vai—the maestrothon was rock at its splashiest, if not always at its greatest. Roger Waters plodded through old Pink Floyd favorites like the star of a *Spinal Tap* parody. Black-clad Bob Dylan was the week's biggest disappointment, scowling and wandering the stage in a fog.

The sold-out shows (over 6,000 fans nightly) were most moving during the tributes—Keith Richards, in skintight jeans and leather jacket, whiskey in hand, dedicating "Going Down" to Freddy King, or John McLaughlin performing "In a Silent Way" in memory of Miles Davis. It was somehow ironic that in these moments of eulogy, rather than in the celebratory jams onstage, the event approached the legendary. —Amy Linden

By Amy Linden

SEVILLE, Spain SEVILLE is considered the spiritual, if not actual, birthplace of the modern guitar; so it makes perfect sense that the Spanish port city is the site of Guitar Legends, an event its organizers are modestly calling "the most important gathering of guitar players since the instrument was invented."

Hype aside, the boast may be believable. The five-day explosion of fusion, rock, blues and flamenco is a veritable Who's Who of world-renowned string benders, and its participants run the age gamut from new kid Nuno Bettencourt (Extreme) to the grand old wizard of the electric guitar, Les Paul. Also scheduled to perform this week in the newly built outdoor amphitheater (part of the upcoming Expo '92 complex) are John McLaughlin, Robbie Robertson, Steve Vai, B. B. King, Richard Thompson and the eagerly anticipated pairing of Keith Richards and Bob Dylan.

Each night—the festival runs through tomorrow—is loosely structured around a particular genre of music. The rousing kick-off blues/R & B extravaganza found King, Bo Diddley, Robert Cray, Stax ace Steve Cropper and scene stealer Albert Collins battling it out in a fury of minor chords and genial one-upmanship. For many of the players, this will be the first time they have shared a stage; that spirit of camaraderie is at the heart of this event. Naturally, cable was in on all of this guitar worship, and local pay-per-view channels will be airing three hours of highlights tomorrow.

With such a wide array of axmeisters, not to mention the unannounced guests rumored to be popping up (Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page), Guitar Legends is an air guitarist's dream come true. / ■

Amy Linden is a free-lance writer.

Late in the month, KEITH RICHARDS

turned up at a guitar-legend colloquium in Seville, Spain. "It was great," he reported. "The production was good, there were nice people backstage, and nobody stole anybody's guitars." The sellout five-night event was part of Seville's Expo '92 arts festival, and it was sponsored in part by Gibson Guitars. Among the thirty-two axemen who took the stage—some playing Gibsons, others favoring guitars made by the *other* guitar company, Fender—were ROBBIE ROBERTSON, RICHARD THOMPSON, B.B. KING, BO DIDDLEY, BOB DYLAN and JOHN MCLAUGHLIN, who offered up a rendition of "In a Silent Way" in memory of the late trumpeter MILES DAVIS. "One minute you're talking to ROBERT CRAY," Richards raved, "and the next minute you're talking to LES PAUL. You *never* get that—when you're doing a gig, you never get that high a concentration of people playing one instrument at one time."



The Bob Dylan Almost-All Stars headline the Seville Guitar Legends

Cher: Q interview

-Did you ever meet Elvis? I ask

-No

-You never met him?

-No

-How about Bob Dylan?

-Yeah. I know Bob.

-What's the history of that relationship?

-Well, it doesn't get...good¹, she laughs. He was recording for David Geffen when I was living with David and we became friends. I always liked him because I recorded his songs from the beginning of my recording career. We all lived out on the beach at the same time and Sara and the kids and us spent holidays together and stuff.

-Do you think Bob has an attractive mind?

-I like his sense of humour more than anything else.

Robbie Robertson: Rolling Stone interview 14th November 1991 issue.

RR ..and the next thing we knew, we were playing with this folk-singer guy in front of thousands and thousands of people, every one of them booing.

RS *I've never been entirely clear how this Dylan-Hawks combination came about.*

RR I don't think Bob really knows, I think he just decided to make a move from being Bobby, the folkie to the electric Bobby and he was trying to figure out who to do this with. And we were in a position at that time where we were this kind of underground word, an interesting band to know about.

RS *Had you heard Dylan's records or seen him play?*

RS I went to New York and met Bob, and he was trying these various electric guitars. I told him some things, because I knew a lot about them - get this one, get that one, this one's a joke, send it back. He liked finding somebody who would cut to the chase real quick on this stuff. Then we went somewhere with a couple of guitars, and we just played music, and to be perfectly honest, *that* was the first time I ever really heard Bob Dylan: sitting on a couch playing with him singing in this room. That was the first time I said to myself: "There's something to this. It kind of rambles on a bit, but there is something about it." I was playing a little loud, and I could see from his attitude that he *wanted* it to be rough. The whole idea of his playing electric music was to get this kind of passion into this music, this anger and explosiveness.

It was like the beginning of rock & roll in a way - mixing two worlds together. And with our band, whatever anyone else was doing, we went the other way. When we made *Music From Big Pink*, everybody was getting really loud, psychedelic, flashy, and we went the other way again. This was never discussed, you understand. It was just a consistent reaction through the years. We were always rebelling against the rebellion. And more recently, whether I'm experimenting, doing a song with the Meters in New Orleans or with U2 in Dublin, it's still about mixing worlds together.

Because that is what this music was founded on.

RS *How did the rest of the band react to the Dylan thing?*

¹ Referring here, I think, to journalistic hope for sexual liaisons to report on.

RR I went back and told the guys that there was something about this thing, and everybody was kinda like "I don't know about this stuff." There was a lot of strumming going on in this music, and we didn't play with strummers. Anybody who strummed, it just seemed to take the funkiness out of it. Unless, of course, it was rockabilly, and this wasn't rockabilly. So in the beginning, there was a lot of skepticism about whether this was meant to be.

Levon and I played with him at Forest Hills Stadium and the Hollywood Bowl, and then we all went up to Toronto and started working up the songs to do this tour.

RS *The audience didn't boo when you played Memphis; I was there.*

RR That's right. In the South we played somewhere else, and they didn't boo us there, either....Dallas? Levon was proud of those exceptions, but he had trouble buying into the whole booing routine.

RS *Do you think all that touring with Dylan had a big impact on the kind of songwriting you developed, the things that started to emerge on Music from Big Pink?*

RR Well, Bob was in the process of opening up a door, and music needed this door opened. But I was constantly saying, "How about a little less in the word department?" When I first met him, I played him this ballad from the Impression's *Keep On Pushing* album, **I've Been Trying**, written by Curtis Mayfield.² I said: "They're not saying anything much and this is killing me, and you're rambling on for an hour and you're losing me; I mean, I think you're losing the spirit." We would talk about this very freely. I would say: "Are you trying to teach me something, are you preaching to me, what is your *job* here?"

Makes You Wanna Stop And Take A Look

[1: Hard Rain by Peter Abrahams; NEL 1988]

As a change - for the moment - from Bob and the film world, let me begin a new mini-serial-section within *Bits & Bobs* for references to Dylan in works of fiction. My parents were down during the Xmas period and my dad spotted an interesting looking second hand bookshop. Knowing I'd get nowhere near the Russian section until he'd had the first look, I idly gazed through the titles and espied *Hard Rain*; which struck me as an interesting title. The fly leaf mentioned that the novel exposed "the murky nightmare behind the Sixties dream of Peace and Love". This clinched the deal, the title was obviously no coincidence. The book is prefaced by the quote *Everybody must give something back for something they get* and, indeed, this is the "message" of the novel. I would have to add that I found the story fairly ludicrous but then I only read it half-heartedly and was more interested in the Dylan references and passages. There is nothing too extraordinary - not that there should be - but the book is peppered with references to the soundtrack of the sixties - both folk and rock. Here's an intriguing reference to Dylan:

Then someone pounded a bass drum; an organ came in like a far-off wail; guitars, electric and acoustic, made the air vibrate in metallic and woody ways; and a raw scared scary voice, not Bob Dylan from People magazine and MTV but Bob Dylan back then, started to sing: Visions Of Johanna. It took her away on musical roads that divided and subdivided her mind.

² Are you sure it wasn't "When A Man Loves A Woman" ? If you're going to be as boring as Slash, Robbie, at least try and be as consistent.

Makes You Wanna Stop And Take A Look [2: James Kelman Short Story]

A good starting place for references like these would be in the works of Irish and Scottish writers since, despite Clinton Heylin's startling declaration that England is the home of Dylan's greatest fans, he seems to have made a stronger and more lasting impact in those countries. (I'm talking only of the UK and Ireland here and basing this on personal observation only. It would be interesting, would it not, to discover if Dylan was a bigger seller/ a deeper influence in areas with a strong folk heritage? Maybe Clinton was referring to regions of England I have little knowledge of and maybe those regions have a strong folk culture? Articles on A4 paper please to the editor....) Anyway, Olive rang to say she'd read a short story by Glaswegian writer James Kelman involving two friends who grew up together in the sixties and met up again later in life. Title unknown, I'm afraid, but we think it was in a recent collection. Apparently there is a neat little scene when one friend notices his old pal is playing *Blood On The Tracks* and remarks: "I see you still play Dylan then?" "Doesn't everyone" was the reply.

Makes You Wanna Stop And Take A Look [3: The Magic Flute by Alan Spence]

Another Scottish author of some renown surely did his sales no harm by having a few lines from *Visions Of Johanna* partially visible on the cover. (Including "Infinity goes up"..) Here are a couple of relevant extracts:

"So I see," said Tam, gesturing at Brian's bag, a canvas haversack with pop-art designs drawn on the flap in felt-tip pen - a stylized fish, as if cut from a Union Jack, a target beside the name of the Who. Across the top Stones was lettered roughly in red, and along the bottom like a streetsign it read Desolation Row.

"I see you're into Dylan as well"

"He's brilliant," said Brian.

"You know we're doing Blowin' In The Wind at the school concert?"

To his annoyance, since he'd come back upstairs, the words of In Mobile kept running through his head:

In Mo- In Mo- In Mo- In Mobile

There must be something about Mobile. Dylan had written about it. Stuck inside of Mobile.

Oh mama, can this really be the end?

It must be one of those towns.

Rab had told him a joke. This guy comes up to him, a visitor to Glasgow, says, "See this place man, it's the arsehole of the universe."

"Oh, well," says Rab, "You'll just be passing through then."

Arseholes again. Something so Scottish about it. A whole nation anally fixated. Never got beyond it.

Still.

Can this really be the end?

At least Dylan had replaced Rab's Beer Bar doggerel.

Shakespeare's in the alley, with his pointed shoes and his bells.

Round in circles. Shakespeare was what he should be reading. He went back to his notes, switched from Vaughan with his ring of pure and endless light, back to past questions on Lear.

Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Discuss

Makes You Wanna Stop And Take A Look [4: Mumbo Jumbo by Ishmael Reed, A&B]

That last was thanks to Alan MacDonald as is this most curious specimen. The fly leaf of the book reads thus:

Mumbo Jumbo is a whirlwind tour of America's eccentric culture - an almost surrealist detective novel featuring Private Eyes PaPa LaBas and Black Herman who together investigate questions that have long played mankind: Was Warren Harding a member of a hated cult whose rites are still practised? Why did Sigmund Freud call the United States "a mistake"? Why do intelligent shrinks make journeys to West Africa, Haiti, Brazil and New Orleans? Why is Moses called the Bob Dylan of the ancient world in certain Hoodoo texts?

Why, indeed? I'm afraid that there are too many pages detailing Moses's performing career to quote here. I'm also sorry to say that if Moses is being directly equated with Bob, Grossman's long feared hatchet job on Bobby has been well and truly gazumped. The connections in the book between Dylan and Moses are sometimes explicit: Moses runs away from home, changes his name, goes to learn from an ailing, legendary musical (and magical) teacher figure. Moses is an out and out scheming bastard which may or may not be why I don't get all the references to Dylan; but I'd like to point out that anyone reading it had better be wary of Moses's equivalent of the Royal Albert Hall concert - even the acoustic set is a rough ride here! And when ~~Bob~~, er, Moses, comes on with the band:

Well, Moses went on stage and began gyrating his hips and singing the words of the Book of Thoth, and a strange thing happened. The ears of the people began to bleed. Some of them charged the stage and tried to get at Moses but the Atonist thugs beat them back. 1 Osirian priest could no longer take it. He and several others knew what Moses had learned and knew how it was using him.

Anyone know more about this?

Makes You Wanna Stop And Take A Look [5: Our Friends From Frolix 8 by Philip K Dick, Grafton 1976]

Finally, in this mini-section, Alex called - as if by psychic radar - to remind me about the one direct reference to Dylan in the late, great philosopher-in-fun s.f.-disguise Philip K. Dick's novels. When I first came across this I almost shouted for joy - next to Dylan, Dick was the most profound Post War influence on my adolescence. Indeed Dick preceded Dylan for me, but I was already one year into Dylan when I came across the following passage. [Incidentally, I realize that "shout for joy" seems a juvenile reaction (although I was in mid teens at the time I suspect my reaction would be the same today) but I refer the long standing Dylan fan back to the excellent letter quoted on the cover of the first issue of *The Telegraph*: Dick too inspires this dual feeling of appreciation and "fan worship". I put it down to their being "Popular Culture Artists" - and sub genre ones at that.]

The following references sandwich a love-making session, a quintessential Dickian coupling:

[Nick:]

"Do you like Yeats?"

"Was he before Bob Dylan?"

"Yes."

"Then I don't want to hear about him. As far as I am concerned, poetry started with Dylan and has declined since."

[Nick quotes Yeats...]

"You like that," Charley asked. "That kind of old stuff?"

Nick said, "It's my favourite poem."

"Do you like Dylan?"

"No," he said.

"Tell me another poem." Dressed, now, she sat beside him, knees bent, head bowed.

"I don't know any others from memory. I don't even remember how the rest of it goes, and I've read it a thousand times."

"Was Beethoven a poet?" she asked.

"A composer. Of music."

"So was Bob Dylan."

Nick said, "The world began before Dylan."

Eggs at 12 cents

The pedal steel guitarist from k. d. lang's band was reputedly contacted by Dylan's management and asked to attend rehearsals. On arrival he was asked by Dylan if he knew any Steve Miller songs - which he did and they played a few; the same thing then happened with the Eagles' **Desperado**, after which they played a few Dylan songs. When the rehearsal ended, Dylan insisted on giving the chap something for turning up and, despite the guitarist's reluctance he was rewarded with some eggs that Dylan went and got for him. At least that is how I first heard the story, I've since heard that Dylan charged him 12 cents an egg.

1956 (Is He There?)

I got a very interesting call from Lambchop last night in which he revealed that the BBC may have got their hands on a tape of Bob in 1956. The story goes that they were filming for the Dylan episode of their forthcoming rock song documentary series (Dylan's being **Highway 61 Revisited**) when they stumbled across someone with Dylan on a reel-to-reel from those far flung days. Rock 'N' Roll Dylan with a song about Little Richard? Too good to be true?³

Odds & Ends

There is a lovely moment in the show from Evanston on November 4th when the band start to play **I'll Be Your Baby Tonight** but Bob belts out the opening line from **Watching The River Flow**. Nothing unusual in this you might think - Dylan's backing groups are used to these sudden changes, however on this occasion Bob had already played **Watching The River Flow** (only two songs previously) and he had to make the switch. ("What's the matter with me.....shut your eyes" - Indeed!).....NME, 11 January 1992 reports that "Bob Dylan's handwritten lyrics to **Talkin' New York** fetched a handsome \$8,250"....Tickets on sale for Adelaide on Feb 29th and Mar 1st, if they sell out expect a third date there....possibly a date in Hawaii shortly thereafter....Letterman 10th Anniversary Show taping did not apparently go well despite Bob's backing singers including Michelle Shocked, Roseanne Cash and Emmylou Harris. Dylan sang **Like A Rolling Stone** though the band (which included Chrissie Hynde and Jim Keltner) also played **All Along The Watchtower** and **Rainy Day Women Nos 12 & 35** on either side of this. Reports so far indicate it was an indifferent vocal, it will be broadcast in the States on February 6th so we'll know soon enough.....John Bauldie interestingly suggests March/April as a possible date for a new album on his hotline - regular listeners to the warmline will remember that March was my guess (so that rules it out, really) - John goes on to say that it may be heavily acoustic...Letterman show retaped after Bob was taken aside and ticked off for his earlier performance; second shot at it was apparently as good as the first was lack-lustre. Knowing our luck they'll broadcast the first one!

³ Well, at time of going to print, the answer is yes and no. The story seems good, though the date is a more realistic 1959. If this is not quite as exciting it is still the potential event of the year. Nashville Skyline voice, anyone?

George Beddow

11/10/91

I found *Homer, the slut* in Virgin Megastore yesterday. I read it and loved it. Thanks.

I was interested that you mentioned Nick Cave - surely Dylan's true heir, not the dull and "worthy" mediocrities listed by Patrick Humphries (thank God you noticed his *Isis* and *I Want You* remarks!), such as Tracy Chapman, Mark Knopfler, Suzanne Vega, Michelle Shocked, Billy Bragg and, God forbid, Sting. A question: Do you know what Dylan songs Cave has covered in concert - apart from *Wanted Man* which appears on LP? Anything Dylan has said about Cave - I do wish Dylan would compare *The Mercy Seat* with *God Knows* - would interest me too.

Dylan in 1966 and 1975 is my all-time hero. Everything - music, language, performance, mystery, glamour, insane energy - came together. Only The Velvets, Patti Smith, Television, The Stooges and The Stones circa '69 come close for me....

I take it you use the word "close" in a much looser way than myself, George. Otherwise, thanks a lot for your letter. George went on to request some Dylan/Patti Smith material which I was able to locate for him but I've drawn a blank on the Cave front. Any helpers out there?

Mel Prussack

16/9/91

Not only is there room for a publication such as *Homer, the slut* but there is also a tremendous need for it. While some of the other Dylan mags mention where to find certain articles and other mags may give brief notes on such articles, your publication takes the time and space to reprint these articles in whole. That alone would warrant the need for you to continue this endeavour. Besides that you have some fine articles and I like the attitude of *Homer, the slut*.

Thank you Mel, you may not realize this but you are (in)famous as my last non-Rolling Tomes subscriber from the U.S. You will enjoy the subscriber special, I'm sure, and perhaps you could tell me if the US cuttings are a good collection or (as I fear) I've missed many. This is a thinly-veiled plea for non-British readers to send in all the clippings they come across.

Andrew Steed

2/8/91

Thanks very much for issue 3 which I received about an hour ago. I've obviously only had a quick look through but I'm impressed. I liked the format of the Glasgow/London section where you get the set lists followed by the reviews. It gives a clearer overall perspective. Enjoyed Chris Cooper's article. This side of things is a mystery to me and it was quite enlightening.

I disagree with Graham Ashton. Reprinting cuttings/articles is useful as I don't have time to search all of them out myself and it's nice to have them all in one place.

I would very much like to get hold of Issues One and Two. If you have any left....

Whoa, there Andrew. I'm afraid that there are no copies left of issue one, two or three. (I'm sorry for not printing this letter in the last issue, as I said at the end of the section, I knew I'd overlooked a couple!) Nearly every other letter includes this same request which in my lighter moments I look on as a tribute to *Homer, the slut's* abiding interest but, in my ~~more realistic~~ er darker moods, I see as a reflection of the collector instinct. Your letter really does highlight the most recurring themes in letters to me, Andrew, as your point re the cuttings is another very popular one. I think the difference being that Graham goes out and tracks down all the cuttings himself. Until I started *Homer, the slut* I had no idea of the amount of stuff that is written about Bob and, despite the fact that most of it is rubbish, there is a lot of good stuff being produced. (As I hope BITS & BOBS and the FIRST SPECIAL ISSUE demonstrate.) Thanks for your letter and apologies again for not printing it last time round.

Richard Bailey

December 91

Please accept my subscription for your great magazine on Sir Robert. I'm a new Dylanologist of fourteen months (who, incidentally, claims *Street Legal* to be one of his masterpieces) and at my age (nearly 30) I'm wondering what took me so long to be a disciple. You may be hearing from me in the future.

I look forward to that, Richard. You'll find that lots of other readers regard *Street Legal* as one of his "masterpieces", though it does seem to attract pretty vocal detractors too. Would it be sitting on the fence to say that I regard some of the songs as masterpieces? ("Yes" - everyone.)

Romeo Ceccarelli Paxton

8/9/91

I got No. 3 of your fanzine from *Rolling Tomes*, and unfortunately (but perhaps obviously) there was no subscription form inside.

As a long time Dylan collector I really appreciated your work...should the earlier issues be unavailable my subscription can start from No. 4, but I'd really appreciate a Xerox of the article about **Desolation Row**, that, I understand, was in issue two. Since I'm writing a similar article for an Italian Dylan fanzine, I'm sure it could be of great interest to me. Hope you can supply. Thanks for the moment, keep up the good work...

Thanks Romeo, hope you found the copy of help. Your letter can stand as another incentive for others to get *Rolling Thunder* (see advert elsewhere in this issue) - which really is well worth it. I especially liked the last two issues. Most of you would get the extra benefit of learning Italian too - well most of the important words anyway - and over one hundred ways to say "beautifully sung" in Italian. When I lived there it took me only a week to decipher the football reports so it shouldn't take us too long to work out the drift of these articles on the only thing more important than fitba', should it?

Ray Webster

October 91

In chapter 10 of the excellent OH NO! NOT ANOTHER BOB DYLAN BOOK, Patrick Humphries mentions Dylan being available on computer software. "You simply put a question to Dylan on the computer and the program finds a correlative answer in one of his songs!" I would be grateful if you would ask in *Homer* if any fellow readers know where this program may be obtained.

Great magazine, thanks for all the quality info. especially in Issue 3 - and thank Dylan we don't have to put up with all those *insider* jokes and references scattered throughout other fanzines.

If there is anything I can do to help please just ask.

Thanks, Ray, The ways that you, & indeed anyone, can help *Homer*, the slut is with contributions - (& thanks for the cutting you sent later) - as for production well, any printing or copying facilities would be useful, also paper, binders, Canon copier toner...I'll take anything that helps *Homer*!

As to the computer program, I remember this as being fairly silly. You type in a question and the program searches through a database and pulls out an answer. I believe it was in the IBM/MS-DOS format. I haven't, however, ever seen it and, like you, would like more information on it. Any helpers?

Paul Wright

9/10/91

Thanks very much for issue 4 of *the slut* which was devoured with much gusto. Apologies for not getting the article up in time - will try for issue 5? (Trust me).

I'll have you know I like to feel I'm a well rounded individual who has never left reality and who hasn't hitch-hiked for years - on this plane nor any other!....

Mmm, let us stop here at this presumably mistaken "neither...nor" construction and point out that by December you never knew that "number 4 had even been issued" and that your article on Foot Of Pride is as non-existent as the one on No Method, No Guru, No Teacher that you also promised. (I won't mention the others as I'm worried I offend you.) "Trust Me" - huh, Trust Yourself.

Mike Wyvill

3/10/91

Thanks for *Homer* 4 which I'm still reading. It was a great pity about Miles, he still had a lot to offer, I'm sure. I haven't quite assimilated the facts yet but I've certainly played a lot of his stuff since the news.

Having re-read what I said in my letter, which you printed, about *Under The Red Sky* I feel slightly coy about it. I'm not sure that I meant to deride all of Bob's 12 bar blues efforts, far from it, I think there are some great ones (**Call Letter Blues**, **New Pony**, **Ballad Of Hollis Brown** and so on). The point I think I was trying to make was that some of the 12 bar stuff has a throwaway feel to it and as such does not take a lot of writing. In this category I tend to place **10,000 Men** and (you'll probably disagree) **Cat's In The Well** - though the very fact that I can't be sure about the latter song speaks volumes.

Or could it be that I deliberately read it that way to force you to come back to me on it and nudge you toward writing a piece on it?

Steinar Daler

July 91

Thanks a lot for the first three issues of *Homer, the slut*. Enclosed you will find a list called *Bob Dylan LP ratings* that I made up. It is my view on all the officially released Dylan LPs, excluding live LPs and greatest hits/boxed sets etc.

I've given each of the LPs points after a scale that I find most important when listening to a Dylan LP. To me the lyrics are the most important and I multiply the points on a scale from 1 to 10 by 5 for lyrics, by 4 for melody, by 2 for vocal, by 2 for backing (both Dylan's own and the musicians') and finally by 1 for the recording standard.

BOB DYLAN LP RATINGS. LOWEST POSSIBLE SCORE = 14, HIGHEST = 140.
 <60=TRASH, 60-74=BAD, 75-89=OK, 90-104=GOOD, 105-119=EXC., >120=MASTERPIECE.

YE- AR	TITLE OF LP	LYRICS (5)	MELODY (4)	VOCAL (2)	BACKING (2)	RECORD- ING (1)	TOTAL NR:
62	Bob Dylan	3x5=15	5x4=20	5x2=10	5x2=10	7x1=7	62 24
63	Freewheelin'	7x5=35	8x4=32	6x2=12	6x2=12	7x1=7	98 11
64	The times they are a-changin'	6x5=30	6x4=24	5x2=10	5x2=10	7x1=7	81 15
64	Another side of	6x5=30	5x4=20	6x2=12	5x2=10	7x1=7	79 17
65	Bringing it all back home	7x5=35	6x4=24	6x2=12	6x2=12	7x1=7	90 14
65	Highway 61 revisited	8x5=40	8x4=32	8x2=16	9x2=18	8x1=8	114 7
66	Blonde on blonde	8x5=40	10x4=40	7x2=14	9x2=18	8x1=8	120 5
67	Basement tapes	8x5=40	7x4=28	7x2=14	7x2=14	4x1=4	100 9
68	John Wesley Harding	7x5=35	6x4=24	5x2=10	7x2=14	8x1=8	91 13
69	Nashville skyline	4x5=20	5x4=20	3x2=6	6x2=12	7x1=7	65 22
70	Selfportrait	2x5=10	6x4=24	4x2=8	7x2=14	7x1=7	63 23
70	Dylan (A fool such as I)	2x5=10	5x4=20	3x2=6	5x2=10	5x1=5	51 27
70	New Morning	4x5=20	5x4=20	4x2=8	6x2=12	7x1=7	67 21
73	Pat Garrett & Billy the kid	5x5=25	6x4=24	5x2=10	5x2=10	6x1=6	75 18
74	Planet Waves	8x5=40	8x4=32	7x2=14	10x2=20	9x1=9	115 6
75	Blood on the tracks	10x5=50	9x4=36	8x2=16	8x2=16	8x1=8	126 2
76	Desire	9x5=45	9x4=36	8x2=16	9x2=18	8x1=8	123 3
78	Street Legal	10x5=50	10x4=40	8x2=16	8x2=16	5x1=5	127 1
79	Slow train coming	7x5=35	8x4=32	10x2=20	8x2=16	9x1=9	112 8
80	Saved	2x5=10	4x4=16	9x2=18	4x2=8	5x1=5	57 26
81	Shot of love	6x5=30	6x4=24	9x2=18	7x2=14	8x1=8	94 12
83	Infidels	6x5=30	6x4=24	9x2=18	9x2=18	9x1=9	99 10
85	Empire burlesque	4x5=20	5x4=20	8x2=16	8x2=16	8x1=8	80 16
86	Knocked out loaded	4x5=20	4x4=16	7x2=14	6x2=12	6x1=6	68 20
88	Down in the groove	3x5=15	5x4=20	7x2=14	7x2=14	6x1=6	69 19
89	Oh mercy	8x5=40	9x4=36	8x2=16	10x2=20	9x1=9	121 4
90	Under the red sky	1x5=5	5x4=20	6x2=12	8x2=16	8x1=8	61 25

Others may find the vocal to be the most important, or maybe even the recording standard, or maybe something else, like the cover. Anyway you can use a system like this to make up your own *Bob Dylan top 20 list*. Maybe it could be interesting to see some of the subscribers' lists in *Homer, the slut*.

Far be it from me to speak against a structured approach, Steinar, but any system which places, say, Planet Waves above Highway 61 Revisited and eight places above Bringing It All Back Home is in need of a rethink. (OK, I know it is only my opinion.) It will be interesting, however, to see if this gets any response.

Jim Heppell

4/12/91

I was delighted to come across Issue 4 of *Homer, the slut* in Virgin Oxford Street in one of my rare trips to the capital. Delighted because I had not seen or heard of the magazine before and delighted because it makes up for a wasted journey to Crouch End.

[DIGRESSION 1: those rotters at "Terrapin Trucking" advertising items before they have them in stock!...I was hoping to pick up a copy of the latest offering from Robert Hunter and the Garcia and Grisman album; (Hunter and Jerry Garcia are of course mainstays of the "Truly Dead", notorious to readers of *RTS*); maybe you, like many other Dylan fans it would appear, do not appreciate the Grateful Dead, but bear with me...can you imagine a show at the Fox Warfield - scene of former triumphs - which included **When First Unto This Country** (a.k.a. Coat of Many Colours), **Handsome Molly**, **Man of Constant Sorrow** and **Two Soldiers**? Unfortunately it was not Dylan but Jerry Garcia and David Grisman, 2/2/91. Grisman has collaborated with Garcia before: for example, he played mandolin on the original Dead version of **Friend Of The Devil** - the only Garcia-Hunter song performed by Dylan as far as I know (not counting the onstage appearance with the Dead in '89); he played tasteful electric mandolin on Garcia's version of **Positively 4th Street** recorded for the **Live At The Keystone** albums; and he played excellent mandolin with Dylan on **To Ramona** in 1980 at Portland. Unfortunately too I do not have a tape of the Garcia/Grisman show, and I do not yet know what tracks appear on the Garcia/Grisman album other than that it is studio and acoustic. But I do know that Garcia's vocals should be admirably suited to these songs (of which Dylan has produced masterly versions) and that Garcia (and for that matter the Grateful Dead and Robert Hunter) would make excellent subjects for your **Some Other Kinds of Songs** feature. But I do apologize, I am digressing and probably boring you....]

I was also delighted with the contents of the magazine, not least when I found the comments on that enigmatic song **Angelina**, because I had already put pen to paper to comment on **Angelina** in particular and **The Bootleg Series** in general, and had sent off my effort to the *Telegraph*. What is more, John Bauldie had written back to say that it might even appear in that illustrious volume....at last I can die happy!...I have seen Dylan in concert and my name might appear in earnest in the *Telegraph*...(but hang on, I have not heard Garcia and Grisman yet,...and maybe further volumes of *The Bootleg Series* will come out...!)

[DIGRESSION 2: As I am rambling on I might as well comment on Mark Carter's piece on **Angelina**, which I must say I enjoyed. Firstly, the comment about "inexplicably drawn towards her door...." Dylan, (or as I would prefer to say, the narrator of the song), says he does know what has drawn him, he is just not telling us; this technique of leaving things out of the narrative has been explained by Dylan himself, I believe. But, if I may speculate wildly, when he asks what it is that makes Angelina think she has seen him before I suppose that he is alluding to the sort of thing that is going on in **Isis** (the song, that is, not the magazine).

Secondly I think that there is no suggestion in the song that he should love her, as Mark suggests; rather I think that the "game" he cannot play is what is going on "in the arena" and throughout the song, namely the struggle to get what you want in this material world, and involvement with Angelina - tempting though it is - would drag him down to the "unholy places".

Thirdly, my first reaction was to say that I cannot see **Angelina** as a symbol of Christianity and that as far as I could see there is nothing in the song to support that interpretation; generally I do not go for allegory, and there is obviously a temptation to make assumptions about the words and/or biography of an artist and force the one to fit the other; this has often been done disastrously with Dylan and the man himself has often eloquently rebutted this approach. However, it is fascinating to consider "what is going on" in Dylan's songs (as John Bauldie has expressed it), and in **Angelina** while there is a core narrative running through the song there are also, as Mark put it, several "movies going on in there". Mark's suggestion has forced me to look at the lyrics again with his idea in mind and I have to conclude that my first reaction was maybe too strong and perhaps that interpretation is there, somewhere: you could for example interpret the "best friend/worst enemy" as referring to the hypocritical "man-stealers talking in the name of religion" or as disdain for the machinery of the established church. The question is how far can you go? (To digress further, in pursuing this point I would like to comment on John R Stokes's piece on **Handy Dandy**, at least the introduction: while accepting that there is a difference

between maths and poetry (...but did Dylan not say something about his songs being mathematical!...) I do not entirely agree that whatever "you believe in" (finding answers to "what the song means") "must be correct" (for you). The response of an individual to a song, poem, or any work of art is obviously a personal matter and we can apply what we pick up anyway we please but appreciation of a song or poem has to be based on what is actually in there: they say that "literary criticism" sometimes tells you more about the critic than the subject.)

That question (of how far you can go) leads me to comment on another contribution to Issue 4, the letter from Steve Wicks. As you may just have divined from the above I disagree with his comment about analysis of Dylan songs. Such "literary criticism" does not have to be "long" and "boring" although it sometimes (often?...almost always?) is. But to say that Dylan (let alone his "followers"! is "no intellectual"....oh, mercy! I am (almost) speechless. After all, Dylan's music is not just instrumental and is the product of intellectual activity - admittedly rather more worthwhile than that of those who are Chasing the shadow of the Tambourine Man! Okay, some intellectuals belong in "Pseuds Corner" in *Private Eye*, but Dylan is not one of those; it is a question of judgement (personal? subjective?) which of his "followers" belong there. Just reflect on this: some people - Dylan included? - regard **Renaldo and Clara** as one of his masterpieces. Others do not.

This brings me to the point of this letter: congratulations on **Homer**, (please don't shut that door !), thanks for the obvious hard work, I agree that there is room for more on Dylan if it complements *Telegraph* and *Isis* (the magazine, that is) and I enclose my subscription.

With regard to content, I used to enjoy the Oracle and feedback features of *Telegraph* and I notice that **Homer** includes letters from readers and editorial comment. Can this continue as a vehicle for questions, answers and different opinions - appropriately edited? I enjoy the rare opportunity for discussion on various aspects of BOB DYLAN - THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC and even with much of the fairly extensive bibliography on Dylan there are still many questions and unsatisfactory answers. To give one type of example, what is the D-train? To give another, none of the **Focus On** feature on **Don't Think Twice, It's All Right** said quite what I would want to say about that song; (whether anybody else would want to read that is why we need appropriate editing!).

Ah, the Dead; well, Jim, I certainly "don't appreciate" them just now - but then, I hardly know them. My sister had an album of theirs - it was obligatory at her age, I think they gave them away with school milk or something like that - and I bought a double album for 50p at a second hand store when I was 15 (we all have some adolescent shame) but it was unplayable (not that there was anything wrong with the actual vinyl!) Ok, only jesting; there are, contrary to appearances, quite a few combined Dylan & Dead fans, Jim, and, as I say, I just don't know enough about them to comment. I don't like the '87 collaborations with Dylan much but see the last issue for me giving the Dead their due.

Your points re Angelina are interesting and, in pursuing the matter with both you and Mark, I am both increasing my pleasure in listening to the song and sniffing the possibilities of a Carter/Heppell article. However, I still tend to think Dylan was right to leave this off the album. The melody is gorgeous and the singing glorious but, in places, aren't the images half-baked and the rhymes preposterous? (The things this editor will write to get responses!) Granted, some lines are superb: "Do I need your permission to turn the other cheek? If you can read my mind why must I speak?", for example put me in mind of She's Your Lover Now but the whole thing seems imbalanced and unfinished to me.

As to your points re "criticism" and "intellectual activity" please see previous Homers and my reply to Bob Forryan, below, for my general stance.

Joe McShane recently lent me all the back issues of *The Telegraph* and I read them all just before the 10th Anniversary issue. I, too, liked *The Oracle*, I also liked the outstanding humour of (particularly) the earlier issues. It might be pertinent, in relation to your request, to enquire why Mr Bauldie "retired" *The Oracle*. I think the best way forward on this point is to do what you suggest - use the letters' pages to raise questions and then anyone reading it can reply if they know the answer. (I tried a similar thing on the warmline and it failed miserably.) We'll see what response your "D-train" query evokes. (Latest betting = 2/1 Diesel Train; 7/2 Delayed Train and 100/1 outsider: Dead Train.) Thanks for this and your follow up letters, Jim - I'll save your Foot Of Pride points until Paul Wright submits his article or, if, as seems likely, it is sooner, the final edition of *Homer*, the slut.

Ian Lewis

12/1/92

Many thanks for the copy of *Homer, the slut* 4, it is great that someone is doing what you do, *The Telegraph* is a good read, *Isis* is great for information, *Homer* is fun.

Indeed, thank you Ian, the last new subscriber before issue 5.

Bob Forryan

7/1/92

I finally found time to finish reading **Homer** no. 4 and felt I had to write and thank you and, since I've got to put pen to paper anyway, offer you the odd thought on what I do and don't like about fanzines in general and, inevitably, **Homer** in particular. Anybody editing a fanzine is setting themselves an impossible task: "Half of the people can be part right all of the time" and all that.

The first pre-requisite is an unusual title, so you've passed that test. It should also look and feel physically like a fanzine. **Homer** somehow achieves that nice home-produced (I almost said amateur) feel and appearance. *The Telegraph*, for instance, has gone way past being a fanzine - it has become to all intents and purposes a professional magazine without the profit making ethos. And because of its glossiness and quality production it is a pleasure to own, but it's not really a fanzine anymore.

A fanzine should be intelligent but not too "arty-farty" or academic. He's only a "performing artist", after all ("My stuff don't hang in museums", I said that). That's not to say I don't appreciate a serious treatment; just that I'd rather have a Paul Williams than a Wilfrid Mellers - if you know what I mean. A good serious approach doesn't try to be objective, but does try to tell us what sort of experiences the writer passes through when he listens to Dylan. All right, no-one should try to live through Dylan, but his music can enhance our lives. So I love writers who tell me how his "art" enhances their lives to see if I can relate in the same way. I also don't like facts - discographies, chronologies, train-spotting - that's not what matters to me. *How does It feel?* - that's what matters.

I do like letters to the editor - and responses by him. Also an editorial - John Bauldie was right to be amazed that some people didn't like these features in *The Telegraph*. Let's have more, Andrew.

Neither do I like biographies or others who tell me "this show is essential" or "that album is crap" and so forth as if they are the sole judge of what is good. By all means tell us what you think about some aspect of his work, but don't make it appear that only your opinion counts - I don't mean you, I mean anybody writing in any medium. If I think *Self Portrait* is the greatest album (I don't, but if I did), who can prove I am wrong? For me it is and that's what matters to me. Any art is subjective and you can't measure it. No one person's opinion is infallible and it is a mistake when writers express themselves in some sort of expert or arrogant manner.

I love copies of newspaper cuttings. They add breadth and a non-partisan perspective. When I started to read these in **Homer** I gained the impression that you were prepared to accept that Dylan (I find it hard to call him Bob) isn't perfect, that it is allowable to criticize him. When I got to your grumbles about *Behind The Shades* and *Oh No! Not Another....* I thought perhaps I had misjudged, I hope not. He is not God. He is a very great musician and his lyrics/life are an endless fascination, but I'm prepared to criticize what I don't like and allow others to do the same, even if I disagree. Voltaire and all that. If I say that, except for anything by Paul Williams, my favourite Dylan book is *The Dylan Companion* you might get some idea of where I stand. Although I know many fans are critical of this anthology, I very much enjoy the variety of approaches it contains.

I do like concert reviews where people tell us how they saw a show, what their reactions were to which songs, even what the audience was like. *Look Back* is quite good at this sort of stuff.

I like **Some Other Kinds Of Songs** - can you find someone to do Lou Reed? I also like your system of page numbering - *Vive La Difference*. *Focus On* is superb.

I disagree with Mark Carter's interpretation of *Angelina*, but he's entitled to his view. Mine is that it's a pretty tune but the lyrics are pretentious and the rhymes contrived - I still like listening to it though.

I think that **Homer, the slut** may be my favourite Dylan fanzine - but this could be an initial infatuation. I'll wait for issues 5 and 6 before passing judgement - are they imminent? Anyway, thanks for all your work.

If I may answer two disparate points at once, Bob: Firstly, thanks for the "home-produced" observation - and "amateur" would have been accurate until now. I intend to keep this "feel" despite being compelled to move Homer, the slut onto a more business-like footing. Secondly, one of the ways I see of doing this, I feel, is to keep my Bits & Bobs "moans", ramblings etc. and my letter answering in the spirit of the original, personalzine, Homer that is, informal, like a chat in the pub, perhaps even a touch sarcastic. (I'm even known to put myself down, you know.) It is surely obvious that I think "it is allowable to criticize Dylan" - some of the things I've published are libellous far less critical. (Anyway even I have been heard to remark that Are You Ready? is perhaps not quite as good as the very best of Neil Young.) And I don't think Dylan is God though that may just be because I'm an atheist. In the case of Patrick Humphries I was mainly complaining about the manner of his criticism. OK, you're right about the Gracelands bit - but don't you think you can take this objectivity too far, so that everything is as "good" as everything else? To refer back to Jim Heppell letters also, there seems to be almost a fear of saying "X" is better than "Y". There is a place for intellectual discussion and evaluation of art. I believe that William Blake is obviously a "better" poet than Pam Ayres, I believe that this is also demonstrably true. If, after fair discussion and debate, someone still disagrees with me, I will not think "well, that is true, each to his own, it depends on the reader/listener - both are equally good"; I will think "what a prat". Whenever you allow that, say, Dostoyevsky is a better novelist than Jeffrey Archer you allow someone the right to say Blood On The Tracks is a better album than Self Portrait. This does not mean that you do not allow someone to propose the reverse but you will want to know why they think it better, on what grounds the comparisons are made, by what yardsticks the judgements declared. As I say there seems to be a fear of this whole area and it is one I intend to pursue either in the pages of Homer, the slut, or, if the subject is found to be too abstract, elsewhere. I'll keep you informed. By any standards I was just picking on Clinton Heylin's subjective views and saying mine were the opposite, but it is, as I say, a very informal bit of Homer, the slut and Mr Heylin seems particularly adept at doing the same thing! I'm sure if he ever read it he'd just think "garbage - I'm right and he's wrong!"

In general Homer, the slut seems to meet with your preferences, Bob; and to finally show that I too can be critical of the man, you'll notice from my reply to Jim Heppell that I agree with your view of Angelina. I note that one of the things you like - when someone "does try to tell us what sort of experiences the writer passes through when he listens to Dylan" - is almost a definition of what Dave Wingrove's piece does and hope that this issue has at least "pleased one of the people most of the time". Thank you very much for taking the time to analyse your feelings towards each section of Homer, the slut - Oh, and I covered Lou Reed's New York in issue one's Some Other Kinds Of Songs.

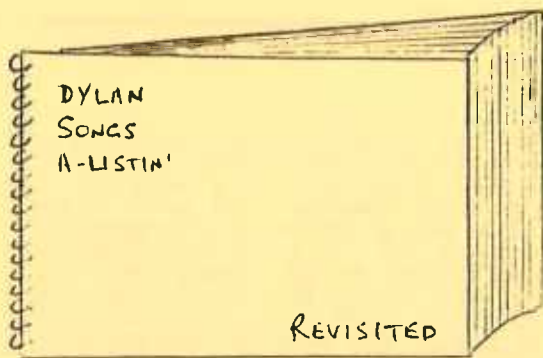
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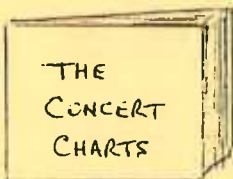


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Dignity: True worth, excellence, high estate, esteem.

We're having one of those periods where the material is coming out so fast that we can't give it proper attention. And not just concert tapes, though I feel that some of these are too good just to be missed in the rush. No, *The Bootleg Series* has overshadowed the *Oh Mercy* out-takes tape, and in particular the song **Dignity**. The whole tape is excellent, though the original version was running a little slow, thus going on to a second side of a C90, and even the improved correct speed is over-recorded in places.

(This can be taken as a plea for a perfect copy, if such a thing exists.)

Sometimes, on those lovely occasions when you're listening to a Dylan recording for the very first time, you hear the first few bars, and you know it's going to be something special. **Blind Willie McTell**, **Angelina**, **Brownsville Girl** etc. Another test is when you never want the song to end, some songs sound as though they could last for ever if only Dylan was prepared to let them. **Up To Me** is a good example of this type of song. I can remember willing it to continue even after the backing musicians had packed up and left the studio.

Dignity falls into both these categories. Once I fathomed the double melody of the song, I was with it all the way, not really needing to catch the lyrics, or so I think, to understand what I felt from the song. Dylan's voice is, in places, as sharp as the "chilly wind" and the "razor blade." And even though the last verse sounds like a final verse, I kept hoping throughout the final fade out instrumental that Dylan would find somewhere else to look for "dignity".

Yes, this is another list song, yet the description of the people searching, and of the places they search, and people they ask, make it one of Dylan's most imaginative songs for a long time. Once I'd decided that this was a song that I could relate to, I started to justify this decision by catching the lyrics, which luckily isn't generally too tricky. There are, obviously, plenty of words and ideas. The theme of searching for dignity is one I can sympathise with, can't everyone? It fits in with *Oh Mercy*, an album which seems to me to be based on self examination, painfully so. The attempt to separate the important from the distractions and irrelevancies that clog up day to day life.

It is sung from the perspective of a fifty year old man, one who has been many places, done many things, yet isn't clear what is of real worth. He's been where vultures feed, has heard tongues of angels and of men, has gone down steps to tattooed land, and to the valley of dry boned dreams. The song looks at old men, wise men, drinking men, sick men, all of them searching for something within. Dylan has been all these people and more. He's been close to finding what he's seeking, not in 'masterpieces of literature', but in a note. But he was trying to read it:

on a rolling river in a jerkin' boat

I know how he feels.

As well as looking, Dylan also asks those he meets. The maid, the cops, Mary Lou, Prince Phillip(?). You don't get dignity by getting rich, or famous, or powerful. It's something you can't describe, but can recognise. One person Dylan doesn't ask is God, I'm not sure if that is deliberate, or important.

*So many roads, so much at stake,
So many dead ends, I'm at the edge of the lake,
Sometimes I wonder, what it's gonna take,
to find Dignity.*

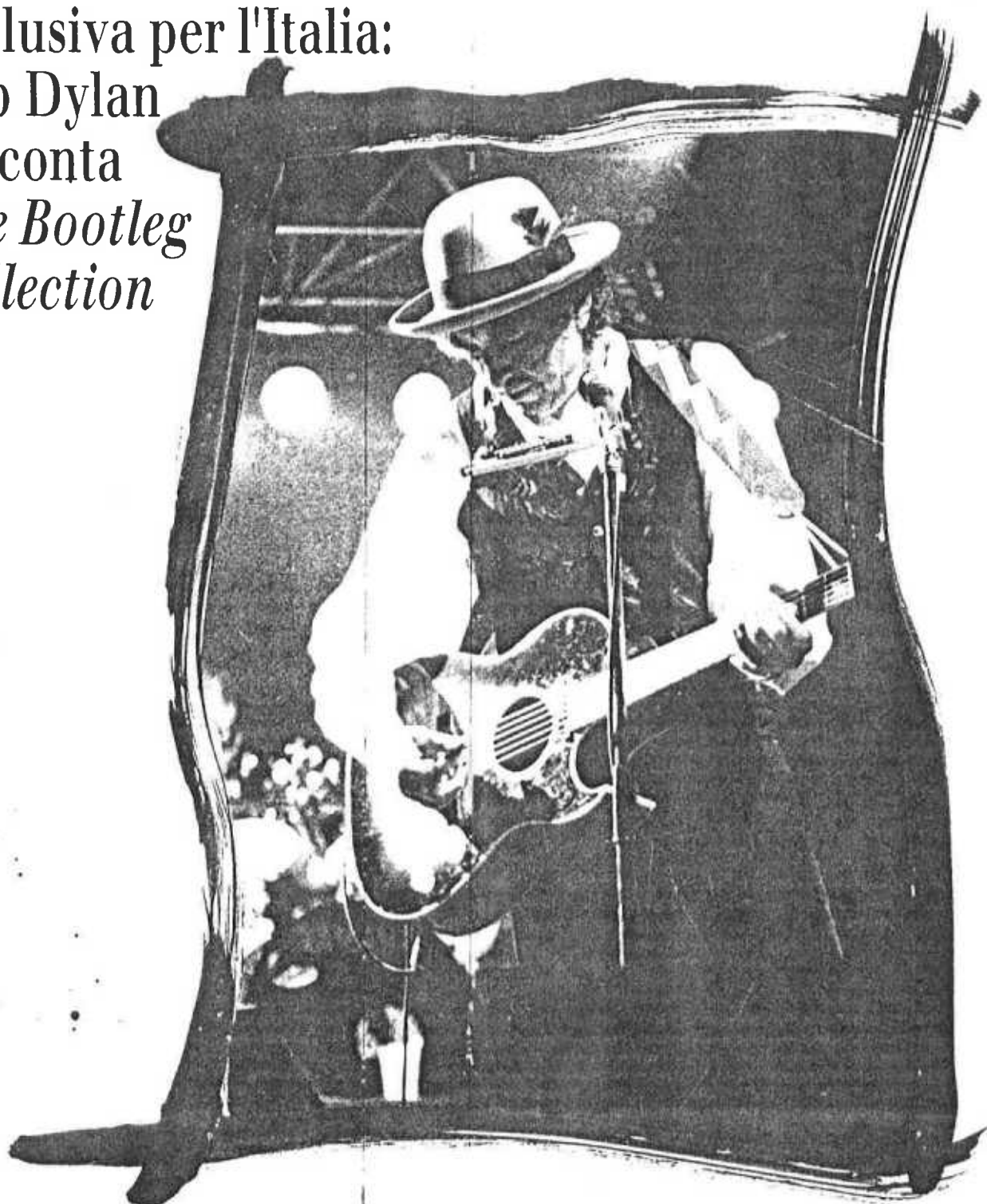
The search for dignity, for self esteem, for true worth, will it ever succeed?

Dylan touches the same subject in **Last Thoughts On Woody Guthrie**, a performance I was delighted to see on the *Bootleg Series*. There he finds his answer in the Grand Canyon at sundown, maybe he'd find it waiting there still.

Rolling Thunder

the italian bob dylan fanzine

Esclusiva per l'Italia:
Bob Dylan
racconta
*The Bootleg
Collection*



rivista trimestrale di musica e cultura dedicata a Bob Dylan
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INFO: Paolo Vites, Viale Ca'
Granda 14, 20162 Milano

Facing Fifty with a folded umbrella

(Just Thinking 'bout a Series of Dreams)

"...But what is a dream? Isn't our own life a dream?"

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

As in all good stories of mystery, drama and suspense, the truth of the plot acted out in the film *The Maltese Falcon* is revealed at the very end of the movie. It is a scene that all discerning Dylan fans will know well: Sam Spade, that irrepressible Private Dick with the smoothed-down hair and the pin-striped suit fast talks the blonde and beautiful Miss O'Shaughnessy into spilling the beans on the whole affair.

Fluttering her eyelashes to embellish John Huston's screenplay, the scheming Miss O'Shaughnessy admits to wasting Spade's partner Miles Archer. She had then intended to hang the wrap on her boyfriend, Thursby, so that she wouldn't have to split the loot with him. But when the serious villains of the piece, Cairo and the Fat Man, arrived on the scene, she turned to Spade for protection. Sam wasn't having any of it: *You killed Miles and you're going over for it*, he spits as he turns her in.

The cops arrive to escort the moll down town, and just as they are leaving, Detective Polhaus turns to Spade who clutches the fake falcon as if it were a real bird, about to fly away.

What is this? Enquires the cop.

Bogart looks down at the objet d'art and, misquoting Prospero from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* follows through with one of the greatest lines in the history of talking pictures:

The stuff that dreams are made of.

There are many individual stories of mystery, drama and suspense covered by the 58 songs contained in *The Bootleg Series. Volumes 1-3* released in April 1991 to herald Dylan's 50th birthday the following month. The compilation represents out-takes from Dylan's entire recording career between 1961 - 1991 and perhaps again the truth of the collective plot is revealed at the very end of the work, i.e. in the final song: *Series of Dreams*.

Could it be that the mainspring of Dylan's creative force percolates through his dreams into his conscious mind and then on to record? And could it be that the placement of the song *Series of Dreams* at the very end of a project covering Dylan's career to date is a hint that Dylan's creativity is, in fact, connected in some way to dreams?

Dreams and dream imagery have certainly figured large in Dylan's lyrics over the last thirty years and, in some cases, the references to Dylan's dreams have explained exactly what the Artist was doing and thinking at a particular time in his life.

Details of Dylan's dreams appeared very early on in his recording career. Indeed in 1963 when, in waking life, he was perhaps considering the quantum leap into the canyon of fame and fortune, Dylan confessed in a song from his second album that his dreams were with his good old buddies and the innocent and uncomplicated life they had led:

*I dreamed I had a dream that made me sad,
concerning myself and the first few friends I had.* (1)

In the same year and in another song from the same album, Dylan reported that his sleep induced subconscious was also concerned with the dangerous state of the world in the wake of the news that the Super Powers were manufacturing nuclear bombs like there could be no tomorrow:

*Some time ago a crazy dream came to me,
I dreamt I was walkin' into World War Three.* (2)

On the 12th April 1963, Dylan played his first important solo concert at the New York Town Hall, and in a poem published in the concert programme, he intimated that the multitude of influences that had been jostling for elbow room in his mind had also been absorbed into his dreams. The autobiographical poem told how he crisscrossed the country:

*With my thumb out, my eyes asleep,
my hat turned up an' my head turned on.* (3)

Girls' faces formed the forward path in 1964 and in a number of songs from the *Another Side* album released in August of that year, Dylan makes reference to dreams:

*It's all just a dream, babe,
a vacuum, a scheme, babe,
that sucks you into feelin' like this.* (4)

*...I dreamed
Romantic facts of musketeers
foundationed deep, somehow.
Ah, but I was so much older then,
I'm younger than that now.* (5)

*From darkness dreams're deserted,
am I still dreamin' yet?* (6)

*And so it did happen like it could have been foreseen,
the timeless explosion of fantasy's dream.
At the peak of the night, the king and the queen
tumbled all down into pieces.* (7)

It is little wonder that, in the liner notes to the album he concluded:

An' I dream a lot. (8)

Although the 7th song on Dylan's 5th album, released in March 1965, was in fact only the 42nd original composition to appear on a record to date, he called the song, a rambling tale of Captain Arab and his crew, **Bob Dylan's 115th Dream**; but later in a song from the same album he switched to being concerned with someone else's dreams:

*At dawn my lover comes to me
and tells me of her dreams. (9)*

In 1967, during the period of seclusion following the fall from the motor cycle and the public eye, Dylan was perhaps becoming restless and having some rotten nights:

*Ev'ry body's doin' somethin',
I heard about it in a dream,
but when there's too much of nothin'
it just makes a fella mean. (10)*

Getting back to the market place, in a song from the album that was released at the end of 1967, Dylan provided full details of one of his dreams:

*I dreamed I saw St. Augustine,
alive with fiery breath,
and I dreamed I was amongst the ones
that put him out to death. (11)*

The closing years of the turbulent 60's remained for Dylan, however, a period of relative inactivity in the writing of new material - perhaps he wasn't having any dreams! It was somewhat appropriate therefore, that, when he entered the Nashville Recording Studios in May 1969 to lay down some cover versions for the Self Portrait album, he chose a song with the lines:

*Blue moon,
you saw me standing alone
without a dream in my heart
without a love (a song?) of my own. (12)*

But the period of seclusion was so important and, if St. John of the Cross was correct in his view that the road to salvation is represented by a mystical ladder which has to be ascended then, at some stage during 1970, Dylan must have realised that he was well and truly upwardly mobile. It was a time when he became close to family, to nature and to God, and he was happy with his lot. In a song from the New Morning album released in October 1970 he triumphantly declared:

*This must be the day
when all of my dreams come true. (13)*

And the Father of whom he most solemnly praised during this period was not only the father who was capable of turning the river and streams, but also:

*Father of time
Father of dreams. (14)*

Dylan must have had plenty of time for consideration and meditation as he sat beside bridges and walked beside fountains. In another song from the 1970 album he described one of his leisure pursuits, reviewing the entire situation:

*Catch the wild fishes that float through the stream,
time passes slowly when you're lost in a dream. (15)*

All good things must come to an end however, and like the red rose of summer that blooms in the day, that special time had to eventually fade away as Dylan terminated his retreat in the hills of Woodstock and returned to the hustle and bustle of New York City to face the pressures of publicity and rock super-stardom. This may have put some strain on his personal relationship with his family, but in 1973 he seemed pretty self-assured, at least in his dreams:

*My dreams are made of iron and steel
with a big bouquet
of roses hanging down
from heavens to the ground. (16)*

Everything thereafter went from bad to worse and 1974 found Dylan taking stock:

*I woke up on the roadside,
day dreamin' 'bout the way things sometimes are.
(17)*

It appears that he was continuing to dream, though, as in a song written in 1975, Dylan confirmed:

At night I dream of bells in the village steeple. (18)

Following what must have been a distressing chasm in Dylan's life, in the summer of 1978 he released the album *Street Legal* and perhaps he was reflecting on what had passed him by when in one song from the album he remarked:

There's a million dreams gone. (19)

In another song he became philosophical:

*In death, you face life with a child and a wife
who sleep-walks through your dreams into walls.
(20)*

Then, perhaps, realising that it was a time for getting on with the job of making real bucks for financial reparation, he declared in another song:

*Son this ain't a dream no more,
it's the real thing. (21)*

Dylan went further along the spiritual road in 1979 when he embraced Christianity and, as he wondered what was happening to his companions, he used the image of a spiritual sleeper in the hope of arousing them:

*You got some big dreams, baby,
but in order to dream you gotta still be asleep
when you gonna wake up? (22)*

On the 10th November 1980, at the Fox Warfield Theatre in San Francisco, Dylan premiered a song that, long before the hullabaloo arose from the realisation that Dylan had utilised various lines from the film, *The Maltese Falcon*, he in fact quoted Bogart's famous last line of the film:

*There is a city of love,
far from this world,
and the stuff dreams are made of. (23)*

But again there came a crossroads, a time to make a pact with whatever or whoever it is that drives you to take the next step along the highway. In a song from the album *Shot Of Love* released in August 1981, Dylan hints that not all of his slumbers have been tranquil, when he expressed:

*I have gone from rags to riches
in the sorrow of the night
in the violence of a summer's dream,
in the chill of a wintry light. (24)*

Perhaps this unsettling state of affairs prompted the question posed in another song from the same year:

*Did you ever have a dream that you couldn't explain?
(25)*

Although he was certainly sure of the nature of some of his dreams as he confessed in another song from this period:

*Lately I've been having evil dreams,
I wake up in a cold blue glare. (26)*

1983 saw Dylan in a somewhat negative mood in referring to dreams in his lyrics. Perhaps he was unsure about his own future when he wrote:

*And all your dreams have vanished
and you don't know what's up the bend. (27)*

Then in another song he wrote about:

A dream that bust. (28)

There was no uncertainty however about the place or the person Dylan subsequently found as evidenced by certain songs on the 1985 album *Empire Burlesque*. As he bade farewell to a past persona with the question:

*Am I no longer a part of your plans and your
dreams? (29)*

he welcomed the arrival of an incoming character/situation with the sentiment:

You're living in a dream. (30)

and in another song:

*I could be dreaming
but I keep believing you're the one I'm living for,
(31)*

but with the realisation that:

*I know this dream, it might be crazy,
but it's the only one I've got. (31)*

Only one dream for a habitual dreamer must have been frustrating, however, and it wasn't long before the dream was ended and, in that state of a dream's semi-unconsciousness his mind was loaded with new ideas, as he explained in a co-written song from his 1986 album *Knocked Out Loaded*.

*I was knocked out and loaded in the naked night.
When my last dream exploded,
I noticed your light. (32)*

Although he noticed the light, he certainly didn't seem to be drawn towards it as his persona became transformed into the burned out, devil-may-care rock star, Billy Parker. The role consumed Dylan as he got into the mood of the character for the filming of *Hearts of Fire*. It was back to the evil dreams of *Need a Woman* and, in a song written in 1986, he described the subject of the vision that came rolling across his mind late at night. It was some kind of vampish female who wore a dress *fire engine red*, who had a *crazy rhythm* when she walked and who made him nervous when she started to talk. He kept telling her that he:

Had a dream about you, baby. (33)

It took Dylan a long time to shake off the chains of Billy Parker and it seemed that he may have remained imprisoned by the role during the years 1987 and 1988. In fact, during those two years, he failed to write any original material for public consumption on his own, which is somewhat astounding when you consider that, in every previous year since 1961, Dylan had written at least one original song.

But throughout this barren time the light that he had noticed in 1985 was still shining and, at last in 1989, it crept into his dreams:

*In the lonely night,
in the blinking stardust of a pale blue light,
you're comin' through to me in black and white
when we were made of dreams. (34)*

And so we come to another 1989 song - *Series of Dreams* - which sits at the end of the *Bootleg Series* like a lighthouse shedding light on all the rocks and gravel that caused the Artist to falter in his path, to check his surroundings and his situation and to jot them into his subconscious where, following a process which is best developed during the hours of darkness, they are eventually reborn into life on another day.

There is in fact a precedent where Dylan has made reference to the concept of dreams to conclude a project and thus perhaps hint that the entire venture was connected in some way to the subject of his dreams.

Towards the end of Dylan's 1978 released film *Renaldo and Clara* - which, at 232 minutes is of strikingly similar length to the 230 minutes 58 seconds of the *Bootleg Series* - there is a scene where the film crew descend upon a dormitory of the Southern Massachusetts University and awaken some sleeping students who are then questioned as to what they had dreamt of the previous night. The film then concludes with an image of Dylan lying on the floor in a dream-like state.

This ending to the film is a subject that Jonathan Cott raises with Dylan in the *Standing Naked* interview published in *Rolling Stone* on the 26th January 1978.

Cott: I wonder what you think of the guy who ends your movie singing his fulsome, crooning version of "In the Morning" with those memorable lines *I'll be yawning into the morning of my life*. Why is it there?

Dylan: The film had to end with him because he represents the fact that Renaldo could be dreaming. And he might be singing for Renaldo - representing the light.

The interview itself concludes in a similar fashion with Cott remarking that Dylan seems to be pretty sure of himself. Dylan replies:

I'm sure of my dream self. I live in my dreams, I don't really live in the actual world.

The subject of Dylan's dreams was explored further in another interview. This time the interviewer was Sam Shepard and this is how he reported the exchange in the magazine *Esquire* published in July 1987. Dylan's disclosures are particularly interesting if certain lyrics of *Series of Dreams* are borne in mind:

Sam: Did you dream about music back then?

Bob: I had lotsa dreams. Used to dream about things like Ava Gardner and Wild Bill Hickock. They were playin' cards, chasin' each other and getting around. Sometimes I'd even be there in the dreams myself.

Dylan himself raised the subject of dreams in another interview which was published in the book *Written in My Soul*. When talking about his songs, Dylan told the interviewer Bill Flanagan:

I'm not going to write a fantasy song. Even a song like *Mr. Tambourine Man* really isn't a fantasy. There's substance to the dream, there's something in front of you. You have to have seen something or heard something for you to dream it. It becomes your dream then. Whereas a fantasy is just your imagination wandering around. I don't really look at my stuff like that. It's happened, it's been said, I've heard it: I have proof of it. I'm a messenger. I get it. It comes to me so I give it back in my particular style.

So perhaps it is all a question of interpretation: what is a dream and what is a fantasy and how to distinguish between these two events that are performed on the mattress of mental gymnastics? And when so distinguished, how do you interpret the dream?

In his book *Dreams and Dreaming*, the author Norman MacKenzie writes that:

As soon as human beings developed a written language they began to set down their dreams and record ways in which they might be interpreted.

Indeed, in that most readable of history books - the Bible - dreams are mentioned on numerous occasions to explain and foretell the unfolding of important events. The book of Genesis tells the famous story of how Joseph made a name for himself by interpreting the dreams of the King of Egypt, and the Book of Revelation provides details of the complex symbolic visions that were revealed to St. John the Divine in a dream. In between these book-end chapters, there are numerous other references to dreams and dream interpretations, including: tales of Jacob's dream, Pharaoh's dreams, Solomon's dreams, Samuel's dream, the dream that came to Joseph in the New Testament and the dream that the wife of Pontius Pilate had which made her beg her husband to release Jesus. Pilate took no heed, and by the simple act of rinsing his hands, he scrubbed clean for himself a place in history, but at the same time unblocked the sink that led to the Roman Empire being eventually sent soundly down the plug hole.

Other religions from the East down to the West have placed great importance on the revelations of dreams, and throughout history, eminent poets and painters have utilised their dream images to further their art.

It was not until more recent times however, that the interpretation of dreams became recognized on a more serious, professional level, and in particular with regard to the assessment and treatment of mental disorders which ultimately evolved into the full-blown medical activity of psychiatry and psychoanalysis.

There were two great pioneers who crossed the frontiers of medical research and discovered that understanding the workings of the subconscious mind was of considerable significance in the study of human behaviour. The first of these pioneers was the Austrian, Sigmund Freud who was born in 1856 and the second Carl Gustav Jung who was born in Switzerland in 1875.

To explain the diverging theories of Freud and Jung with regard to the interpretation of dreams would take more time than I have here, but, to put it simply, Freud, in his key work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), considered that the majority of dreams are linked in some way to the dreamer's subconscious thought of sexual activity. This arises from Freud's view that the natural sexual urges of human beings are restrained during infancy and thereafter by social training. Obviously to live in an ordered society you cannot go around gratifying your basic urges all the time. Only in dreams, when your conscious mind is not in control of the situation, can these suppressed urges prevail. Freud took the further view that the correct approach in the study of dreams and human nature was to break down and scientifically analyse each component part of the situation in order to reveal an underlying meaning or problem. Jung, on the other hand, took a much more religious, philosophical and mystical approach to the interpretation of dreams. Norman MacKenzie has the following to say about Jung's attitude towards dreams:

What is the purpose of the dream? His (Jung's) own assumption was that it was a frank, spontaneous and profoundly informed statement of some current problem or situation, of special authority because it was independent of conscious control. In the unknown regions of the mind, from which dreams well up, lay the source of true individuality, the forces that guide man's growth toward self-realization.

Taking a combination of these two pioneering but differing attitudes towards the interpretation of dreams, and placing Dylan's song *Series of Dreams* under the spotlight thus energised, it doesn't need a clever man to see which way the dream goes. Firstly, the song must be divorced from its place at the end of the *Bootleg Series*, so that it can be considered in its own right; secondly, it has to be presumed that the various dream images listed in the song go to make up the "series of dreams" to which Dylan is referring.

There are in fact, four different versions of *Series of Dreams*, namely: (a) the official version as released on the *Bootleg Series*; (b) the version that surfaced with the *Oh Mercy* out-takes; (c) the version contained on the European sampler CD; and (d) a later circulating out-take.

Although version (b) has an extra verse, the remainder of the lyrics on the various takes are very similar except for the start of verse two, and comparing the differences between these versions provides a good example of how Dylan works and re-works his lines.

The beginning of verse two in version (a) goes:

*Thinking of a series of dreams
where the time and the tempo drag
and there's no exit in any direction
'cept the one that you can see with your eyes.*

whereas the start of the second verse in version (c) - (in fact the same as the opening of verse three in version (b)) - has:

*Thinking of a series of dreams
where the time and the tempo drag
suddenly the gate is thrown open
and you're left there holding the bag.*

verse two of version (d) however starts:

*Thinking of a series of dreams
where the time and the tempo fly
and there's no exit in any direction
'cept the one that you can see with your eyes.*

One line that is repeated in all versions gives details of a dream that Dylan is having:

In another (dream) all I seem to be doing was climb.

In his book *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud considered that the act of climbing stairs or ladders in a dream may be a symbolic representation of the sexual act. He writes:

It is not hard to discover the basis of the comparison: we come to the top in a series of rhythmical movements and with increasing breathlessness and then with a few rapid leaps, we can get to the bottom again.

The music is always important in Dylan's songs and at the beginning of versions (a) and (c) there is a horn-like sound that seems to the act of someone waking up and stretching life into sleepy limbs. In all the versions (but most notably in version (b)), Dylan sings to a backing track which has the tempo of a racing heartbeat, but on a closer inspection of the lyrics I would contend that the heartbeat is racing, not by reason of excitement but because of frustration. To my mind, the lyrics tend to suggest that Dylan is not having a ball in bed.

In an unpublished snippet of a rejected lyric that Dylan disclosed to Bono of U2 in 1987, there was a suggestion that Madam Destiny had removed the warming pan of passion from Dylan's bottom sheet and replaced it with the Queen of Spades:

*I was listenin' to the Neville Brothers
it was a quarter of eight
I had an appointment of destiny,
but I knew she'd come late.
She tricked me, she addicted me,
she turned me on my head
now I can't sleep with those secrets,
that leave me cold and alone in my bed.*

Well, what came after 1987?: The physically punishing schedule of numerous concerts aptly named "The Never Ending Tour"; that consequent damn impossible life on the road with its inherent temptation of drug and alcohol abuse; the possible anxiety of an artist who was facing the mid-life crisis, menopausal age of fifty but still wiggle-wiggling around on stage like a twenty year old. And what is the cumulative effect of fatigue, excessive alcohol, anxiety and age upon a natural born lover?: Sexual impotence.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that, because of these factors, Dylan has become a sexual wreck; what I am propounding is the view (and it is only a view) that certain lyrics from the song under consideration disclose and "oh my God, what if it happens to me?" attitude towards impotence, a series of dreams about the impossibility of becoming sexually impotent. The physical factors previously mentioned all have their due effect upon the conscious mind, but we are dealing here with a problem or situation which is dependent of conscious control.

Looking at the song more closely then, I do not have to set out a complex analysis to support my view as most of the pertinent lines speak for themselves. The song starts with:

*I was thinking about a series of dreams.
Where nothing comes up to the top.*

(The second line suggests a failure of blood flow into the spongy tissues of that most personal of places and the consequent inability to ejaculate. Perhaps because of an injury):

Everything stays down (below?) where it is wounded.
(Or perhaps because of temporary impotence. Whatever, it):

Comes to a permanent stop.

(In the second verse, the dreams continue, this time it's):

Where time and tempo drag.

(Everything is in slow motion, nothing is happening to arouse the required sensations until):

Suddenly the gate is thrown open.

(Perhaps the possibility of ejaculation but, again, nothing happens):

And you're left there holding the bag.

(i.e. the scrotum).

Wasn't making any great connections.

(Well, you wouldn't be able to, would you?).¹

¹ [Unlike the younger man in "If You Gotta Go, Go Now" who was able, willing, lookin' and tryin' to connect! Ed.]

Wasn't falling for any intricate schemes.

(Perhaps sexual schemes to arouse the weakness of the flesh).

Nothing would pass inspection.

(Suggesting perhaps a failed medical inspection - of the "cough and feel" variety but, as is usual in this type of case, embarrassment prevents treatment):

Wasn't looking for any special assistance.

(And a reminder of the problem again, someone who has really gone all the way but didn't make it).

I'd already gone the distance.

(So it's back to the dreams, in which):

The cards are no good that you're holdin'.

(Remember Dylan's interview with Sam Shepard. He used to dream of playing cards with the sex goddess Ava Gardner and the most virile Wild Bill Hickock. He used to join in their "games" but he didn't hold the right cards any more. Then there is that great line):

Dreams where the umbrella is folded.

(Now, if you imagine an umbrella as a phallic symbol and an extended open umbrella as the symbol in all its erected glory, then a folded umbrella is... well it's a pretty limp excuse for not wanting to play in the rain with a partner who is already wet!).

Enough, enough I hear you cry. So it has all come down to this has it? A discussion on the (in)activity of Dylan's genitals. Well, to save your blushes, let me say that Dylan's songs always work on more than one level and, in a less outrageous interpretation, the song could also be thought to be about imprisonment and escape. Of being hurled along, without choice, to confront the howling beast at the next crossroads. Since the start of the "Never Ending Tour" in June 1988, Dylan has "escaped" from over 300 concert halls. Well, wherever he manages to escape from tonight, and in whoever's arms he manages to escape to, let us hope that he gets a good night's sleep and, above all, that he has some weird and wonderful dreams. For, if nothing else is certain, then one thing is for sure: over the last thirty years, Dylan's lyrics have been the stuff that dreams are made of.

I started this meandering sequence of words with a quote from an author from the 19th Century so I'll finish with some lines from a 20th Century poet and writer. In her review of *Planet Waves* for *Creem Magazine* in April 1974, Patti Smith had the following to say about Bob Dylan:

To me Dylan was always a sex symbol. Positive energy behind a negative mask is very sexy. Like a full basket under straining pants. It wasn't the world he saved, in my dreams, it was me.

The final lines come from Patti Smith's 1989 album *Dream of Life* and, as I complete this article in August 1991, the words of the poet have a ring of worldly-truth about them:

*I was dreaming in my dreaming
of an aspect bright and fair
and my sleeping it was broken
but my dream it lingered near
in the form of shining valleys
where the pure air recognized
and my senses newly opened
I awakened to the cry
that the people have the power
to redeem the work of fools
upon the meek, the graces shower
it's decreed the people rule
the people have the power
the people have the power
the power to dream.*

DREAM ON

~~~~~

1. Bob Dylan's Dream
2. Talkin' world War III Blues
3. My Life in a Stolen Moment
4. To Ramona
5. My Back Pages
6. I Don't Believe You
7. Ballad in Plain D
8. Some Other Kind of Songs
9. Gates of Eden
10. Too Much of Nothing
11. I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine
12. Blue Moon
13. New Morning
14. Father of Night
15. Time Passes Slowly
16. Never Say Goodbye
17. Idiot Wind
18. Romance in Durango
19. Where Are You Tonight (Journey Through Dark Heat)
20. No Time to Think
21. Senor
22. When You Gonna Wake Up?
23. City of Gold
24. Every Grain of Sand
25. Caribbean Wind
26. Need A Woman
27. Death is not the End
28. Clean Cut Kid
29. Something's Burning Baby
30. Never Gonna Be the Same Again
31. Emotionally Yours
32. Under Your Spell
33. Had A Dream About You Baby
34. Born in Time

# A BOOK THAT NOBODY CAN WRITE . . . .

## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BOB DYLAN

AS DYLAN IDENTIFIES MORE AND MORE WITH GUTHRIE, HIS STORIES BECOME RATHER MORE FAR-FETCHED (EVEN FOR DYLAN) . . . .

..... THAT SONG WAS TAUGHT TO ME BY LEADBELLY WHEN WE WAS IN PRISON TOGETHER..... THIS' NEXT ONE I LEARNED FROM AN OLD BLUES PLAYER I MET WHEN WE WAS WORKIN' IN A TRAVELLIN' CARNIVAL TOGETHER.....



..... HE INVENTS ALL KINDS OF WILD STORIES TO BACK UP THE WANDERING BOHEMIAN IMAGE THAT HE CULTIVATES FOR HIMSELF..... ANYTHING TO HIDE HIS MIDDLE-CLASS JEWISH BACKGROUND OF WHICH HE SEEMS ASHAMED.....

AT LEAST WHILE HE'S TALKING HE ISN'T SINGING!!



..... YEAH, I RAN AWAY FROM HOME DOZENS OF TIMES! I ENDED UP RIDIN' THE MAIL TRAINS AND BOY CARS! SPENT SOME TIME IN NEW ORLEANS..... MET SOME OLD FRIENDS OF ROBERT JOHNSON.....

..... DYLAN'S INFATUATION WITH GUTHRIE BECOMES SO WELL KNOWN THAT, AT PARTIES, PEOPLE SOMETIMES PLAY CRUEL TRICKS ON HIM.....

WHA...?

HEY, BOB, HAVE YOU HEARD THAT WOODY'S STAYING WITH THE GLEASONS?



..... PANT..... SHIT..... PUFF..... IT'S NOT EVEN APRIL.....



..... WHILE STILL MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF, DYLAN MEETS SUZE ROTOLO AND DAZZLES HER WITH HIS WITTY REPARTEE.....

UHH..... HI!!



..... THEY BEGIN TO SEE A LOT OF EACH OTHER, AND SOON THE INEVITABLE HAPPENS.....

..... DYLAN BEGINS TO SING TO HER.....

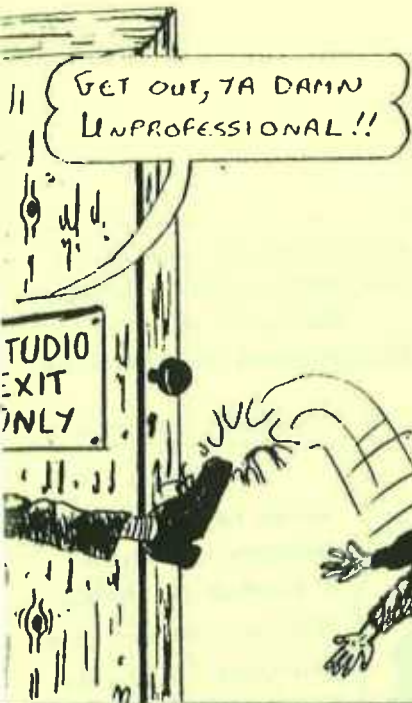


..... I'M A MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW.....

ZZZZZ!!



..... DYLAN BECOMES WELL KNOWN FOR HIS HARMONICA PLAYING, AND IS CALLED IN TO THE RECORDING SESSIONS FOR HARRY BELAFONTE'S "MIDNIGHT SPECIAL" ALBUM. HOWEVER, HE SOON BECOMES DISGRUNTLED WITH THE CONSTANT RE-TAKES AND HE LEAVES..... AT LEAST, THAT'S THE OFFICIAL STORY.....



GET OUT, TA DAMN UNPROFESSIONAL!!



ON THE CLUB AND COFFEEHOUSE CIRCUIT. GUTHRIE DECIDES THAT IF HE DOESN'T MAKE IT AS A SONGWRITER, HE'LL MAKE IT AS A SINGER. OTHERS THINK THAT IF HE DOESN'T MAKE IT AS A SONGWRITER, HE'LL MAKE IT AS A ROADSWEeper.



THIS IS MY FIRST SONG I WROTE MYSELF..... IT'S CALLED "TALKIN' GET-MYSELF-A-RECORD-CONTRACT BLUES"!! IT'S THIRTY VERSES LONG! PAY ATTENTION NOW!!

..... ROBERT SHELTON WRITES THE FIRST RAVE REVIEW OF DYLAN IN THE NEW YORK TIMES. DYLAN IS SO OVER-JOYED THAT HE BUYS UP 1,000 COPIES AND GIVES THEM AWAY TO ANYONE WHO'S INTERESTED.....



MR. DYLAN?

YEAH, THAT'S ME! BY THE WAY HAVE YOU READ M' REVIEW HERE, I HAPPEN TO HAVE A COPY!!

..... DYLAN'S FIRST BIG CONCERT IS IN THE MEN'S ROOM AT CARNEGIE HALL..... THREE PEOPLE TURN UP, INCLUDING THE JANITOR WAITING TO CLEAN UP. DYLAN PERFORMS WELL, BUT IS TENSE.....



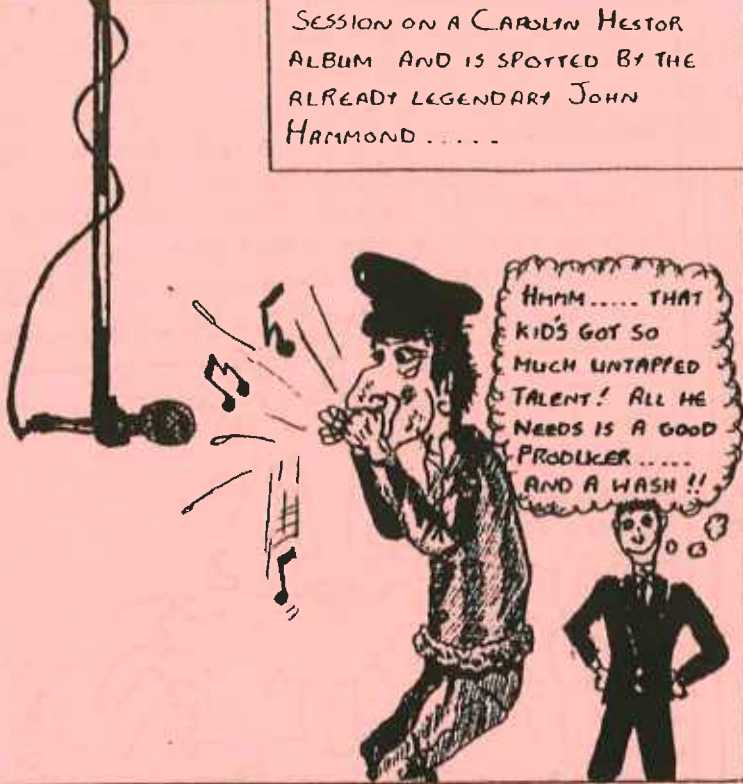
HEY, HEY, WOODY GUTHRIE..... WHOOPS, THERE GOES ANOTHER GUITAR!!!

THWANG!  
CRUNCH!

ON LOAN



SESSION ON A CAROLIN HESTOR ALBUM AND IS SPOTTED BY THE ALREADY LEGENDARY JOHN HAMMOND.....



..... HAMMOND KUSHES DYLAN INTO THE STUDIO AND PRODUCES DYLAN'S FIRST BATCH OF SONGS. THE ALBUM IS RECORDED QUICKLY AND FRIMITIVELY, CATCHING DYLAN'S STYLE AND TALENT. DYLAN IS KNOCKED OUT WITH HIS METEORIC RISE.....



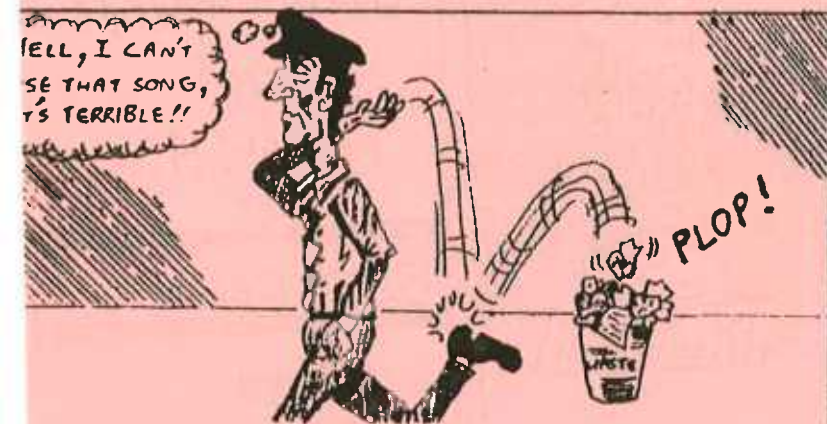
..... FEBRUARY 1962: DYLAN'S DEBUT ALBUM IS RELEASED. IT SELLS ONLY 5,000 COPIES ON INITIAL RELEASE, AND DYLAN BECOMES KNOWN AROUND THE C.B.S. OFFICES AS "HAMMOND'S FOLLY." PLANS ARE AFOOT TO DROP DYLAN AND MARKET THE REMAINING COPIES OF THE ALBUM AS A NOVELTY FRISBEE.....



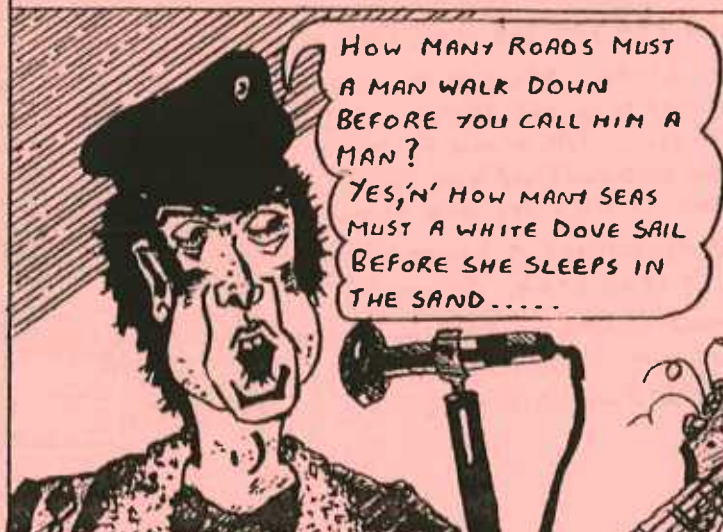
..... BIG NAMES SUCH AS JOHNNY CASH PUT THEIR CAREERS ON THE LINE TO KEEP DYLAN ON THE LABEL. DYLAN MEANWHILE BEGINS TO WRITE SONGS AT AN ALARMING RATE.....



.... THROUGH SUZE'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, DYLAN BECOMES INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE TERRIBLE INJUSTICES AFFORDED COLOURED PEOPLE. HE WRITES SEVERAL SONGS ON THE SUBJECT, SOME GOOD, SOME NOT SO GOOD.....



..... HOWEVER, ONE SONG STANDS OUT FROM THE REST, AND IT'S DESTINED TO SOON BECOME A CLASSIC.....





IS AN INSTANT SUCCESS. OVER 400 COVER VERSIONS ARE RECORDED OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS. DYLAN AND SUZE LIVE TOGETHER IN DYLAN'S APARTMENT, THOUGH THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS SOMETIMES ROCKY.....



SOMEWHERE TOWNS THE LINE DOB LEGALLY CHANGES HIS NAME TO DYLAN. MANY CONSIDER THAT HE TOOK THE NAME FROM WELSH POET DYLAN THOMAS, OTHERS BELIEVE DYLAN'S STORY THAT HE HAD AN UNCLE NAMED DILLON, OR THAT HE TOOK IT FROM MARSHALL MATT DILLON ON T.V.'S 'GUNSMOKE.' IN REALITY, THOUGH, HE TOOK IT FROM A CHILDHOOD PET RABBIT WHO WOULD LATER FIND FAME AND FORTUNE ON THE BRITISH CHILDREN'S T.V. PROGRAMME 'THE MAGIC ROUNDABOUT'

YEAH, I ALWAYS KNEW HE WAS GONNA BE BIG! HE USED T' SING TO ME IN MY CAGE! WHAT A VOICE! WHAT LYRICS! I USED T' CALL HIM LITTLE ZIMMO!!



..... 1962'S CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS BRINGS THE FIRST REAL THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR. DYLAN HAS ALREADY WRITTEN SONGS ON THE SUBJECT LIKE 'I WILL NOT GO DOWN UNDER THE GROUND.' NOW HE WRITES 'A HARD RAIN'S A-GONNA FALL'. HE DESCRIBES IT AS A COLLECTION OF LINES FROM ALL OF THE SONGS THAT HE DOESN'T THINK HE'LL GET TIME TO WRITE.....

.... WITH A BATCH OF NEW SONGS, DYLAN GOES BACK INTO THE STUDIO TO RECORD HIS SECOND ALBUM. EXCITED C.B.S. MEN SEND HIM AND SUZE OUT INTO THE NEW YORK SNOW FOR A PHOTO SESSION FOR THE FORTHCOMING ALBUM.....



JULY 1963: 'THE FREEWHEELIN' BOB DYLAN' SELLS MORE COPIES PER DAY THAN THE DEBUT ALBUM DID IN A YEAR. THE SONGS FIND A HUGE AUDIENCE OF KIDS WHO SUDDENLY IDENTIFY WITH DYLAN. HE'S NO LONGER A GUTHRIE CLONE, BUT A TRUE STAR. SUDDENLY, ALMOST WITHOUT WARNING, DYLAN IS ON THE THRESHOLD OF FAME, WEALTH AND ADULATION.....



CONTINUED NEXT MONTH.....

© M.CARTER.

\* 1-8-88.



# NEWS

FROM CBS RECORDS



Release Date: December 3, 1971

## BOB DYLAN

Bob Dylan's unpretentious guitar and rasping, sardonic cries of anger shook the world when he appeared on the music scene in the beginning of the sixties. It was he who mirrored the attitudes of American youth and during that decade he became a living legend.

But over the years, that fire-brand style mellowed and gradually Dylan's bitter protest gave way to music which contained songs to interest everyone, whatever their musical taste or beliefs.

The recent Soledad prison blood-bath changed that and Bob Dylan is back to his biting best - spitting at society and telling the world about Soledad brother George Jackson, shot to death by American prison guards.

On this latest CBS single, Dylan's lyrics are as controversial as any he has written before but in presentation, he shows both sides of his intricate personality.

The A side, GEORGE JACKSON (ACOUSTIC VERSION) is the vintage Dylan sound, harsh voice accompanied only by the simple country blues of his guitar. GEORGE JACKSON (BIG BAND VERSION) is a more sorrowful translation of the same song. It's a much softer sound but unmistakably that of Bob Dylan.

BOB DYLAN

GEORGE JACKSON (ACOUSTIC VERSION)

COMPOSED

PRODUCED

PUBLISHED

CBS S 7688

c/w

George Jackson (Big Band Version)

Bob Dylan

Leon Russell

Ram's Horn Music

