

Homer, *the slut*



Issue Seven

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J.R. Stokes and Mark Carter write & draw for **Freewheelin'**, a private Dylan fanzine.

Photo Credits: Cover photographs and **Focus On** Page 17 from *Rocks Off*; **Letters** page 9 and **Coming Straight From The Heart** page 3 from originals by John Hume. Others as indicated in text.

Thanks to: Lambchop, Mark C, John Hume, Peter Doggett, John G, Andy, Mum & Dad, Ian McKay, Jailhouse John, Stuart B, Alan MacDonald, Graham A, Jim the Scorer, Jim Heppell, Mike Jackson, all my American and European correspondents, Liz "Vodka & Tonic" Thompson and, especially for help with the album tracks: Michael Gray, John Roberts and Clive Barrett. You all sent in cuttings from sources ranging from *The Beano* to *Personal Computer Monthly*; if I've forgotten anyone -> apologies, write to me and I'll make amends!!!

Special Thanks To: Peter Vincent and Rod MacBeath for help in everything! To Buzby for getting us through the blockades and to Dave Wingrove for the last minute cavalry charge.

The Warmline: On 071-385-1114, I update Dylan news and gossip (nb. It is "gossip" not "gospel") about twice a week. You can also leave any Dylan news after my message.

Subscription Details:

Homer, the *slut* is published four times a year; comprising of three standard issues and a one-off "special", subscriber issue. Dates of publication are intended to be: Feb 1st, June 1st and October 1st. I will stick to these as much as is possible without hospitalizing myself.

Subscription Rates for issues 8-10 inclusive plus one special issue: UK = £12.50, Europe £20:00, Rest Of World £25:00. (USA via Rolling Tomes - see Ads)

Cheques, postal orders etc. payable to "Homer"; send to PO BOX 1494, Fulham, SW6 6PU. This issue will be on sale in a number of record shops including the Virgin Megastore at Tottenham Court Road, London.

RENEWALS: Remember that there are four issues per year; therefore if you took out subscription with issue 5 your renewal is due. (You have paid for Issues 5,6,7 and the Special Subscriber Issue.)

Mid - September 1992

Hi again, despite the "gloom 'n' doom" of last issue's introduction the idea of it seemed to go down well - so you've only yourselves to blame for this issue's opener.

Anyway it should be fairly up-beat shouldn't it? We've had great shows, even greater performances emerging from goodness knows where to be immortalized on shiny little disks and a mega great bash at the Madison Square Gardens in honour of Mr. Dylan about a month from when I type this. And up-beat is pretty much as I feel about Dylan at the moment; so if you get the impression in the following paragraphs that I'm not up-beat - remember this little reminder!

I'd like to take as the basis for this issue's sermon, the words from the right honourable John Bauldie in the foreword to *The Telegraph*. I know that not every *Homer, the slut* reader gets every fanzine, however everyone should get *The Telegraph*. It has been running for over ten years now and Mr. Bauldie's words are as respected as any can be in the Dylan world. Plus the last issue was pretty fab in my humble opinion. The foreword asked us all a series of questions based on the fact that Mr. Bauldie found the Dunkerque show *a raggedy kind of concert* while others *were raving about it: It was great, really great, one of the best ever etc.* Mr. Bauldie asks:

So what's the matter with me? Is it me or is it that others' expectations of the shows aren't the same as mine?



This, and other points made throughout the issue on the same subject raise an interesting point, I think, and one I wish to explore here. You see I think that the show was "really great", though I wouldn't argue against the claim that it was, at times, "raggedy". I suspect the varied response (Bauldie /others) is to do with expectations, but I think, more particularly, it is to do with expectations of consistency. Before coming on to that, though, there a few minor points that need to be borne in mind.

Firstly, there are all the old chestnuts about "the perceiver and the perceived", the impossibility of an objective viewpoint. Were it not for the troubles on the French roads I doubt if I would've been categorically stating that Dunkerque was a better show than Reims to take one of a near-infinite range of examples where one's personal state-of-mind influences one's impressions of the show.

Secondly, there is the old adage of "familiarity breeds contempt". Mr. Bauldie wishes that Dylan would take a rest and change the band. I came out of the Reims show saying that since Dylan appeared not to be getting rid of the band that they should be shot - (Nothing personal, just another rant) - and Dylan should do an acoustic tour where all

the songs had to be ballads dating from at least as far back as the 17th Century. After I'd calmed down a bit I relented enough to let in two songs from the folk-lore of America in the 1930s. Maybe this is all our own fault, maybe we spend too much time listening to tapes from ***The Never Ending Tour***, maybe we go to too many shows. Perhaps all that is needed is us to take a break, listen to something else, go and see more football or whatever and then return to Dylan and pick up on him wherever he's at. It is something I keep meaning to do but never quite get around to!



Thirdly, there is the "fan" element that lives to a greater or lesser degree in all of us. I love to see Dylan on stage and have only once felt disappointed after a show - he virtually just needs to turn up and I'm pleased to see him. If it has not been a great show, this initial pleasure soon wears off - as thoughts of how it should've been make a rational entrance into my cranium. However, if he appears on stage and is in good health, giving it all he's got and pulling a few "great" [as in truly "really great"] performances then I come away ecstatic - as I did from Dunkerque. As time passes I may realize that not the whole show was great - just certain songs. And this brings me to my main point.

Mr. Bauldie, elsewhere, in the last issue of ***The Telegraph*** waxes lyrical over the greatness of **Idiot Wind** at San Jose. Elsewhere again he bemoans that the American shows (May leg) do not seem as great to him as to others. The more I write this spontaneous response the more I'm convinced that the difference in expectation is to do with consistency and timescale of comparison. I loved the shows in France and I still think (so it is not the initial fan reaction) that they were "really great" because they were better than I'd almost dared to hope from Bob Dylan in 1992. I don't for a second think they were "great" if one judges them by Dylan's greatest ever performing years, years when every song was "really great". [For me these years would be everything up to and including '66 and '75-'76']

Some of the songs reach those exalted heights, though, **Idiot Wind** not only at San Jose but also at Santa Rosa; **Black Muddy River** at Eugene, **Little Moses** sometimes, **I'm A Roving Blade** at Reims?...The non-Hendrix-inspired **Drifter's Escape**? I'm

From an original by
John Hume
Merano 1992



becoming less sure that all those reading this will agree with my choices. Even bits of some songs reach that elusive plateau of "true greatness": the ending to **little Moses** or the opening of **You're A Big Girl** at Belforte spring to mind.

So where is all this leading me? It is leading me to say that, even when Dylan is "really great" by today's standards he is still not a patch on what he was before - except intermittently. But that is the way it has to be, I think. Mark

Carter makes the astonishing claim in the letters's pages that Dylan is only human. Taking this as true, it seems inevitable that Dylan suffers from the ageing process like the rest of us! I feel old just now and I'm three years younger than Dylan was when I first saw him, over 14 years ago. I know Dylan is fond of saying that "the older you get the better you get" and good for him to feel so - but all evidence is that the opposite is true, not just for him but for everyone. Nature gives us all our ace cards - both physical and mental - at a very early age and then gradually takes them away; I think it would be impossible to expect Dylan to tour as heavily and play as consistently brilliantly now as he did in the early to mid-sixties.

Why I'm still up-beat is that he manages to pull out so many "truly great" performances despite the heavy workload he's undertaken since 1986. Another reason is that since Autumn of last year there seems to have been something particularly good in nearly every show and that the last nine months have been spectacularly better than the nine which preceded them. No-one I've ever heard can perform as well as Dylan was the last time I saw him, nor I'm confident from all reports as he was last week. There is no reason for this not to remain the case.

I honestly believe that Dylan can continue touring right through his life and always be the greatest live performer, at the same time I believe I've every reason to doubt he'll ever be as consistently great as he once was. I'd argue the same for the albums, the last two have been "intermittently great" for me - move the title track of ***under the red sky*** on to the second side and wow! What a side! However, neither of them would be in my personal "top ten" Dylan albums. (There are eight offerings from the sixties there that would take some shifting.) This is not to say that he can't sometime match himself at his best: **Blind Willie McTell** stands comparison with the very best of his rich and varied output.

And there is nothing to stop him, one year, bringing out an album that tops the lot, but he'd need to focus all his energies on it surely - even Bob can't expect or be expected to still be that great all the time. As he himself has remarked, the songs come much slower nowadays, it is much harder work.

Yep, he's still really great, just in a raggedy kind of way.

¹ I realize that the religious shows could be an area of debate, but I do not feel it muddies my point about age. However, if you do - even though we're talking about 12-13 years ago - I'd ascribe it to the manic fervour of the convert to a supernatural creed.

Well, would you believe it? I've not long finished the above when the startlingly good tape of Minneapolis 3/9/92 appears and, of course, the new album which sounds like exactly what I've been waiting for! In many ways it is indeed the answer to my wishes, however I do have some reservations, fine album though it is. I delayed this issue to say a few words about the album and copy any information on the songs that I have to hand. Of necessity these are my first impressions and, as is the way of things, I may well regret committing them to print, but here goes ->->->

=====



ACOUSTIC / GOOD AS I BEEN TO YOU

CT/CK 532000 Columbia

Side One:

Frankie and Johnny (Albert)
Jim Jones
Black Jack Davy
Canadee-i-o
Little Maggie
Sittin' On Top Of The World
Hard Times

Side Two:

Step It Up & Go
Arthur McBride
Tomorrow Night
You're Gonna Quit Me
Diamond Joe
Froggie Went A-Courtin'

+++ Plus Points +++

It is an excellent selection of songs to cover. Dylan has recently played many wonderful versions of other songs that would have fitted well on this album - **Little Moses**, **Black Muddy River**, **I'm A Roving Blade** etc. - however he has chosen to cover a whole new batch of songs, with only **Little Maggie** being repeated from the live shows. This is great news for the collector; much as one would wish an official **Female Ramblin' Sailor**, surely it is a bonus to have heard it performed beautifully live and have **Canadee-i-o** on the album. (Good as he's been to us, he's being even better.)

His guitar playing is excellent! Can this really be the same man that has strummed his way through countless acoustic sets? Don't you wish he'd played guitar like this every time you've heard **Boots Of Spanish Leather**, **It Ain't Me, Babe** etc.? (To be fair, it has been getting increasingly better live this year, too.) The harmonica-playing is pretty sharp too, though this is not as prominent a feature as I'd presumed it would be.

There isn't a bad track on it! It's true, isn't it? What a difference from *Self Portrait*, *Knocked Out Loaded* and, maybe even, *Down In The Groove*!

- - - Minus Points - - - (With some more +++ too!)

So what, then, are my reservations: well, the voice! Yes, that voice we all love so much, and, yes, there's nothing really *wrong* with it - though it does show signs of wear and tear, here and there - it is just that it is too "same-y", it lacks range. (Of course, the voice is also one of the main strengths of the album - it could hardly be better for, say, **Hard Times**.) When the CD comes out it will not matter, after all, one of the main benefits of the current (but-not-for-much-longer?) medium is that it allows one to pick and choose.

This is no idle comment, because each song suddenly clamours to be heard after a few listenings to the album in its entirety, and you have almost a physical craving to play that track. (This, of course, is as it should be.) In addition, I realize that I, more than most, go potty with delight when he performs any traditional song - or interesting 50's number - like these tracks in concert. I'm not dealing in double standards here, rather I just feel that his voice lacks range when you listen to all the songs at one sitting. There is a loss of sensitivity and a lessening of the caressing of each and every word that can be heard on say, **Moonshiner** or **The Banks Of The Royal Canal**.¹ These are not unfair comparisons, as Dylan himself seems intent on challenging his own past with this release. In addition I don't believe for a second that he is incapable of a greater range nowadays - my musings in the editorial are not to be over-stressed! - some of his recent live performances have shown him to be in fine voice. Is there anything on the album better than **Pretty-Peggy-O** from Minneapolis? I believe there is one of those naughty boot cds coming out soon, entitled, *Dylan Sings Trad* which sounds heaven-sent for me; now, if one were ever to hear such a thing it would be very, very interesting to compare it to *Acoustic/Good As I've Been To You*. (Indeed, a three way comparison with some of the "new, new, new *Basement Tapes*" would be even more illuminating.)

¹(Not that I've got a copy of the latter but one hearing was enough - any copies anyone?)

My real worry is that, for the moment, nothing on the album seems to me to be anywhere near as good as *Moonshiner*; nor, in fact, do I think anything matches *Pretty Boy Floyd* from the *A Vision Shared* tribute album - though *Hard Times* is wonderful as, in its own way, is *Froggy Went A-Courting*. (Which, concludes the album, as usual, on a perfectly fitting note - with an as apt as possible final line.) But I'm back to my editorial now, suggesting that these two songs are "really great" Dylan performances, the rest are "great" only by other people's standards - and it is far too early for me to judge.

(Oh, and there are no Dylan songs on it, no *Song To Woody* here, folks - is this a major minus point to all of you?)

??? Questions It Raises ???

Like all Dylan albums, *Acoustic/Good As I Been To You* immediately raises a whole load of questions.

Why is he so determinedly going against his maxim of 'Don't Look Back'?

The Bootleg Series was one thing, but this is Dylan himself not so much "looking back" as stepping back in history to challenge himself. (The Madison Square Garden event is even more out of character - what exactly is the 16th October, 1992 a 30th anniversary of? And why is Dylan, of all people, encouraging such an event?)

This is a direct challenge to his first album - - which one wins?

If it wasn't for *Song To Woody* and *Talkin' New York* I think I'd plump for *Acoustic/Good As I Been To You* - but it's a tough one.

Why does he choose now to release his first (sanctioned) entirely cover version album?

It couldn't have anything to do with his contract being up for renewal could it? He's surely not stockpiling songs for a new label - after all look at the lovely bash he's being given at Madison Square Gardens.

How will it sell?

Pass. Dylan's sales figures are odd enough without trying to figure out how such a stripped-down, uncompromising offering will be accepted. (If the folkies don't harbour old grudges they will love it, but human nature being such a petty thing...) I suppose a lot depends on college radio in the States. I wonder what Sony/Columbia are anticipating?

When was it recorded?

It doesn't need to be anything to do with the Bromberg sessions, indeed it sounds nothing like the rumoured cuts from there. Maybe it isn't even from 1992, maybe this is the album that was rumoured to be rush-released last December! (If you remember the Mr Bauldie's hotline message.) No doubt all will be revealed soon enough, but you can't help wondering.....

So there you go, first impressions and questions from Mr. Homer on the new offering. It'll probably grow to be my favourite all time album and I'll regret all the reservations forever, but this is how it feels just now, after about six full "listens". On the following pages I'll throw at you any and all information I can lay my hands on², put them with the other piles of paper, collate the little darlings and post them out to you. Now, about this rumour of a follow-up.....



²P.S. And still material arrives, what is this I'm reading from Rod MacBeath? *Step It Up & Go* was one of the Delmore Brothers' most popular songs (as was *Delia's Gone*)! Next time....

Frankie and Johnny (Albert)

This song is well-known throughout America in a variety of guises. From Louis Armstrong to Sam Cooke, big-name entertainers have put out their interpretations. I have amassed more versions of this (in print) than any other; in fact, considering that I've only been "digging" for a few days, it is extraordinary how many I've come across.

It is interesting that Dylan sings the older **Frankie and Albert** but the track is named **Frankie and Johnny**. The former name is used by Taj Mahal on their *Goin' Home* album - which also contains **Black Jack David** and **Dust My Broom**.

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY

Moderato  Traditional 



Frank-ie and John-ny were lovers, Oh Lord - y, how they could love. —They

swore to be true to each oth - er, — True as the stars a — bove, He was her

man, — But he done her wrong. — wrong. —

2. Frankie went down to the hotel,
Looked in the window so high,
There she saw her lovin' Johnny —
Make love to Alice Bly,
He was her man but he done her wrong.
3. Johnny saw Frankie a-comin',
Down the back stairs he did scoot,
Frankie — she took out her pistol,
Boy! How that gal could shoot,
He was her man but he done her wrong.
4. Frankie, she said to the warden,
What are they going to do?
Warden replied, sorry Frankie,
It's the 'lectric chair for you,
You shot your man tho' he did you wrong.
5. Frankie, she went to the big chair,
Calm as a lady could be,
Turning her eyes up, she whisper'd —
Lord, I'm coming up to Thee,
He was my man, but he done me wrong.

305. FRANKIE

AMERICA's two most popular ballads—*Frankie and Barbara Allen*—share a common theme—the revenge of woman on man (see note on *Barbara Allen*, p. 170). Bonny Barbara, without consciously willing it, broke her lover's heart, while the less inhibited Frankie 'dropped her man like a hunter drops a bird'. Frankie had her greatest vogue during the sullragette period. She also took direct action—she cut down the predatory male with her smoking .44. Feminine listeners revenged themselves through little Frankie on a predominantly patriarchal society which treated them as second-class citizens and disapproved of their erotic life. Men sang this song to women in a spirit of guilt, anxious to prove that they were not, like Albert, vain, promiscuous, and unappreciative. Middle-class performers had the thrill of vicarious participation in the sexually uninhibited and violent life of the demi-monde.

For the Negro folk audience, however, the song touched upon even more painful social problems. After Reconstruction and until World War II, Negro men were, by and large, surplus labour in America. Last hired and first fired, they were forced to roam from town to town and job to job. Meanwhile, Negro women could usually get some sort of work as domestics. Temporary liaisons and casual divorce by desertion became common at a certain social level. This is what the blues tell us about. Men of charm and talent could always find a hard-working woman to keep them. As a natural consequence, the ladies protected their honour with razors, pistols, and poison.

A mountain woman named Frankie Silvers chopped up her no-account husband with an axe on Toe River, North Carolina, in 1831, and became the heroine of a good ballad, though probably not the direct ancestor of this one. One expert opines that Federal troops before Vicksburg in 1863 sang the Frankie ballad. Another claims that it was known along the Mississippi in 1888. Orick Johns in *Time of our Lives* writes that the song was popularized by a coloured blues singer named Mammy Lou who entertained at Babe Connor's high-brow bawdy house in St. Louis in the '90s. Other accounts attribute other dates to the ballad, but all of these dates fall between 1850 and 1914, the majority in the mauve decade. My guess is that a number of Frankie-type ballads may have been composed by Negroes and whites in the Mississippi Valley, during this period, about a number of similar incidents. For the reasons already discussed, no other theme had such importance. George Milburn says that he has a hundred such ballads in his collection which mention neither Frankie, Albert, nor Johnny. 'Albert', by the way, seems to be the name of the hero in the majority of older versions, 'Johnny' having been introduced by the Leighton Brothers in the jazzy variant that became a favourite American college song.

The present ballad tells the story of a murder that took place during the 1890's in either St. Louis or Kansas City, Missouri, then the headquarters of ragtime. Here the relatively relaxed racial attitudes, typical of Missouri, brought about frequent contacts between whites and Negroes in sporting-house areas, and thus a number of Missouri Negro ragtime songs (*Bill Bailey*, *Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay*, *Frankie*, etc.) became known to the whole country.

Two women have turned up claiming to be the original Frankie. In 1938 a proprietress of a shoe-shine parlour in Portland sued Republic Pictures for \$200,000 damages when the song was used in a film. She testified that the ballad referred to her murder of her lover Allen Britt in St. Louis in 1899. My present informant, Palmer Jones, says that this version was sung to him in Omaha in 1908, by one Frankie Baker who swore that she had killed her man in Kansas City some years previously, and then had composed this ballad.

305. FRANKIE

FROM: Collection of G. Legman, as recorded in Kansas City by Palmer Jones.
Tune set by Alan Lomax. SET: Belden, 330; Brown II, 589; Laws, 232; Randolph II, 115; Scarborough, 80.

With a rock $\text{♩} = 80$

GUITAR—4, 5B-C, 2A-B
BANJO—5

Frank-ie was a good wom-an, Ev-'ry-bo-dy knows, She'd
give the tail-or a hun-dred-dol-lar bill To make her man a suit of
clothes, He was her man, but he done her wrong.

1 Frankie was a good woman,
Ev'rybody knows,
She'd give the tailor a hundred-dollar bill
To make her man a suit of clothes,
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

2 Frankie was a good woman,
Ev'rybody knows,
Every time she gave Albert a hundred-dollar bill,
He'd spend it on those parlour house who(r)tes,
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

3 Frankie went down to the bar-room
And called for a glass of gin,
She asked the man es'led the bartender,
'Has my cheatin' man been in?
He's my man, I b'lieve he's doin' me wrong.'

4 Says, 'Frankie, I'll tell you no story,
Good gal, I'll tell you no lie,
I saw your man pass here an hour ago,
With a girl called Alice Fry,
He's your man, I b'lieve he's doin' you wrong.'

- 5 Frankie went back to the crib house,
This time she didn't go for fun,
Under her blue silk kimono
She brought her Johnnie's* forty-four gun
To kill her man, 'cause he done her wrong.
- 6 Frankie went down to the hop joint,
And knocked on the hop-joint door,
She said, 'Open up, you Chinese ——— ,
Or you'll run this joint no more,
I'm lookin' for my man, cause he's done me wrong.'
- 7 Frankie went down to the coke joint
And she rung the coke-joint bell,
She says, 'If I find that mistreatin' bastard in here,
I'm going to kill him, sure as hell,
Because he's my man, and he's been doing me wrong.'
- 8 She crept up an old dark alley,
She heard her pet bulldog bark,
Lookin' up the stairway,
She spied Albert sneaking through the dark,
He was her man, but he's done her wrong.
- 9 Now when Albert, he saw Frankie,
The poor boy started to run;
She says, 'You might as well stop, you ——— ,
I'm going to shoot you (dead) with your own gun,
Because you was my man, but you done me wrong.'
- 10 When Albert saw Frankie meant it,
He started off as fast as he could,
But she squeezed that .41 four times
And he dropped like a stick of wood,
'Cause he was her man, but he done her wrong.
- 11 'Turn me over, Frankie,
Turn me over slow,
Turn me over on my left side, baby,
Your bullet wound me so,
I was your man, but I done you wrong.'
- 12 Now the cops they got Frankie
And put her in a cell,
The very first word I heard her say—
'I wonder will my man get well?
I love my man, though he done me wrong.'
- 13 The doctor was to operate on Albert
With a great big surgeons' knife,
Frankie offered the doctor a thousand dollars cold
To save her Albert's life,
'Cause he was her man and he done her wrong.
- 14 Frankie went to the hospital
About three o'clock next day,
She got there just five minutes late,
Albert had passed away,
He was her man and he done her wrong.
- 15 Frankie went to Albert's mother
And she fell down on her knees
And she cried, 'Mother, mother,
Forgive me, won't you, please!
He was your son and the only one.'
- 16 Mother says, 'Frankie, I forgive you,
But forget I cannot,
You killed my one and only son,
The only support I got,
He was my son and the only one.'
- 17 The judge, he says to Frankie,
'Here you stand before me,
We've got you charged with an awful crime,
Murder in the first degree,
You shot your man, 'cause he done you wrong.'
- 18 Frankie says, 'Judge, I'm sorry,
This thing has come to pass,
I never shot him in the first degree,
I shot him in his trifling ——— ,
'Cause he done me wrong, 'cause he done me wrong.'
- 19 The jury went out on Frankie,
And sat under an electric fan,
Come back and said, 'You're a free woman,
Go kill yourself another man,
If he does you wrong, if he does you wrong.'
- 20 Rubber tire the buggies,
Rubber tire the hacks,
Frankie even rubber tire the horses' feet
To bring poor Albert back,
Though he was her man and he done her wrong.
- 21 Frankie went out to the graveyard
And fell down on her knees,
And she prayed to the good Lord
To give poor Albert ease
Because he was her man, now he's dead and gone.
- ENVOI:
22 I looked down the street, Lord,
Far as I could see,
All I could hear was a two-string bow
Playing *Nearer, My God, to Thee*,
He was her man, and he done her wrong.

* Boy-friend's—may have replaced 'Albert' as the ballad's hero.

- 1 Frankie was a good girl
As everybody knows.
She paid a hundred dollar bill
For a suit of Albert's clothes,
Just because she loved him [so].
- 2 Frankie went down to the bar-room;
She called for a bottle of beer;
She whispered to the bartender:
Has Albert he been here?
He is my man and he won't come home."
- 3 "I am not a-going to tell you no story;
I am not a-going to tell you no lie;
He left here about an hour ago
With a girl called Alice Fry;
He is your man and he won't come home."
- 4 Frankie went to the house
As hard as she could run;
And under her apron
Concealed a smokeless gun;
"He is my man but he won't come home."
- 5 Frankie went to the pool-room,
And knocked on the pool-room door,
And there she saw the man she loved
Standing in the middle of the floor;
"You are my man and you will come home."
- 6 Albert ran around the table
And fell down on his knees.
He hollowed out to Frankie:
"Don't kill me, if you please;
I'm your man and I have done you wrong."
- 7 Frankie stepped out in the back yard;
She heard a bull-dog bark;
"That must be the man I love slipping out in the dark.
If it is, I am a-going to lay him low;
He is my man, but he done me wrong."
- 8 Frankie went down to the river.
She looked from bank to bank:
"Do all you can for a gambling man,
But yet you will get no thanks;
For a gambling man won't treat you right."
- 9 Frankie reached down in her pocket,
And pulled that forty-four out,
And shot little Albert through that suit of clothes
People been a-talking about;
"He's my man but he won't be long."
- 10 "Turn me over, Frankie,
Turn me over slow,
Turn me on my right side;
My heart will overflow;
I'm your man and I have done you wrong."
- 11 Frankie looked down on Broadway
As far as she could see—
Two little children just a-crying and singing
"Nearer, My God, to Thee"—
Seems so sad little Albert is dead.
- 12 They took little Frankie to the courthouse;
They sat her in a big arm chair;
She was listening for the judge to say:
"We will give her ninety-nine year—
She killed her man in the first degree."

Frankie and Albert (Frankie and Johnny)

The "Frankie and Johnny" ballad dramatized on Broadway and in motion pictures and sung everywhere by college students and nightclub entertainers is a vaudeville version of the folk ballad "Frankie and Albert." The stage song, concocted about 1911 by the team of Frank and Bert Leighton, burlesques the tough Negro atmosphere and encourages the hearers to smile at Frankie's possessive passion.

The folk ballad itself seems to have grown out of a sordid shooting that occurred in 1899 in the Negro low-life district of St. Louis. Allen Britt, a handsome Negro of eighteen, noted, incidentally, as a "fancy dresser," was living with a young mulatto woman, Frankie Baker, at 212 Targee (later Johnson) Street. About 2:30 Sunday morning, October 15, Allen staggered home drunk and was drawn by his mistress into a violent argument about another woman he was seeing. According to Frankie's story, Allen attacked her with a knife. She, in self-defense, fired a single shot into him. The other woman in the affair was a Miss Alice Pryor, a name which explains the Nellie Bly, Alice Blye, Alice Frye in the ballad (see *Missouri Historical Review*, 36:75-77).

A few folklorists refuse to accept the Britt-Baker shooting as the basis of "Frankie and Albert" because of reports that the ballad was in existence before 1899 (see Randolph, II, 126). In all likelihood, the pre-1899 ballad, if there was one, dealt with the murder of an unfaithful man at the hands of his mistress or wife. At the time the underworld was excited over Britt's slaying, someone—perhaps the Negro pianist Bill Dooley, who is credited with a dirge on the subject—adapted the older ballad to fit the new circumstances. Frankie's search through barrooms and bawdy houses for the man who was doing her wrong may well have been a feature of the lost ballad, for nothing of the sort happened in the Britt-Baker affair. This would not be the first ballad to be remade to accommodate a sensational repetition of its plot in real life (compare notes to "Mary Hamilton" [p. 183] and "Pearl Bryan" [p. 209]). Barry conjectures (*Bulletin*, 10:24) that "Frankie and Albert" commemorates the slaying of Charles Silver by his wife Frankie at Toe River, North Carolina, in 1831, but the "Frankie Silver" ballads recorded (Brown, II, 699, and references) could not by any process of adaptation have become "Frankie and Albert."

Though deeply influenced by Negro taste and rhythms, "Frankie and Albert" may not necessarily be Negro in origin. The ballad's concentration, gapped narrative structure (each stanza is a separate scene), and bold simplicity of language is in the tradition of old-country ballads and bears comparison with the best of them.

- 13 But the judge, he said to the jury:
"Jury, I [can] see
[Why] she shot the man she loved—
I think she ought to go free:
For a gambling man won't treat you right."
- 14 Frankie walked out on the scaffold
As brave as she could be:
"When I shot the man I loved,
I murdered in the first degree;
He is my man and I loved him so."
- 15 Now little Albert is buried
And Frankie is by his side—
Had it cut on the head and foot tomb-stones,
"The gambler and his bride,"
The gambling man and his bride.

Jim Jones

I've not had much joy with this one; it is a fine song but I can only track down a few previous recordings (still it is early days yet!):

It is on Martyn Wyndham-Lewis & Trevor Lucas's *The Great Australian Legend* and Lawrence Hoy's *Beyond The Seas* as *Jim Jones at Botany Bay*.

Gypsy Davy (Black Jack Davy)

Words & music adapted by Woody Guthrie

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It was late last night when the boss came home, a -
ask - in' for his la - dy. The on - ly
an - swer that he got, "She's gone with the Gyp - sy
Dave - y, she's gone with the Gyp - sy Dave.

-2-

Go saddle for me my buckskin horse
And a hundred-dollar saddle.
Point out to me their wagon tracks
And after them I'll travel,
After them I'll ride.

-6-

Yes I've forsaken my husband dear
To go with the Gypsy Davey,
And I've forsaken my mansion high
But not my blue-eyed baby,
Not my blue-eyed babe.

-7-

Well I had not rode to the midnight
moon
When I saw the campfire gleaming.
I heard the notes of the big guitar
And the voice of the Gypsies singing
That song of the Gypsy Dave.

She smiled to leave her husband dear
And go with the Gypsy Davey;
But the tears come a-trickling down
her cheeks
To think of the blue-eyed baby,
Pretty little blue-eyed babe.

-4-

There in the light of the campfire,*
I saw her fair face beaming.
Her heart in tune to the big guitar
And the voice of the Gypsies singing
That song of the Gypsy Dave.

-8-

Take off, take off your buckskin gloves
Made of Spanish leather;
Give to me your lily-white hand
And we'll ride home together,
We'll ride home again.

-5-

Have you forsaken your house and home,
Have you forsaken your baby?
Have you forsaken your husband dear
To go with the Gypsy Davey,
And sing with the Gypsy Davey
That song of the Gypsy Dave? **

-9-

No, I won't take off my buckskin gloves,
They're made of Spanish leather.
I'll go my way from day to day
And sing with the Gypsy Davey,
That song of the Gypsy Davey,
That song of the Gypsy Davey,
That song of the Gypsy Dave, ***

* Woody Guthrie sings 'campfire'.

** Repeat the last three measures to get it all in.

*** Repeat the last seven measures to get it all in.

No. 5. *The Wrangle Taggle Gypsies, O!*

COMPARE this song with "The Gipsy Countess" (*Songs of the West*, No. 50, 2d ed.) and "The Gipsy" (*A Garland of Country Song*, No. 32). A Scottish version of the words is in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* (volume iv); see also "Gypsie Laddie," in Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish*

Songs (volume ii, p. 95, ed. 1791). In Finlay's *Scottish Ballads* (1808), the ballad appears as "Johnnie Faa," and in Chambers's *Picture of Scotland*, a valiant effort is made, after the manner of Scottish commentators, to provide the story with a historical foundation.

The Wrangle-Taggle Gypsies

Both "The Wrangle-Taggle Gypsies" and "Gypsy Davy" are versions of Child Ballad #200. For another version of this song ("Gypsy Rover")

There were three Gyp-sies a-come to my door and
down-stairs ran this a-la-dy-o, One sang high and the
oth-er sang low, and the oth-er sang bon-ny, bon-ny Bis-cay, O!

-2-
Then she pulled off her silk-
finished gown,
And put on hose of leather-o!
The ragged, ragged rags about our
door,
And she's gone with the wrangle,
taggle Gypsies O!

-3-
It was late last night when my
Lord came home,
Inquiring for his a-lady, O!
The servants said on ev'ry hand:
She's gone with the wrangle-taggle
Gypsies O!

-4-
O saddle to me my milk-white steed,
And go fetch me my pony, O!
That I may ride and seek my bride,
Who is gone with the wrangle-taggle
Gypsies O!

-5-
O he rode high, and he rode low,
He rode through wood and copses too,
Until he came to a wide open field,
And there he espied his a-lady, O!

-6-
What makes you leave your house
and land?
What makes you leave your money O!
What makes you leave your new-
wedded Lord?
I'm off with the wrangle-taggle
Gypsies O!

-7-
What care I for my house and land?
What care I for my money, O!
What care I for my new-wedded Lord?
I'm off with the wrangle-taggle
Gypsies O!

-8-
Last night you slept on a goose-feather
bed,
With the sheet turned down so bravely-O!
Tonight you'll sleep in a cold, open field,
Along with the wrangle-taggle Gypsies O!

-9-
What care I for a goose-feather bed,
With the sheet turned down so bravely-O!
For tonight I shall sleep in a cold, open
field,
Along with the wrangle-taggle Gypsies O!

Canadee-i-o

Another tough one to track down, particularly because there are so many false trails on songs with similar names. However, I've been informed that the version on Nick Jones's *Penguin Eggs* LP is the same one. (Like the two LPs mentioned in connection with **Jim Jones**, this is a collection of mainly sea songs.

Little Maggie

Gun-toting "Little Maggie," first cousin to "Darlin' Corey" and many another wild mountain woman, is a favorite among traditional singers in the Southern mountains. Bluegrass singers are particularly fond of the hard-living damsel and the song is considered by some to be the Bluegrass national anthem. Obray Ramsey, a traditional singer from Marshall, North Carolina, can be heard singing it in *Banjo Songs of the Southern Mountains* (Riverside RLP 12-610). Other recorded performances include Tom Paley on *Southern Appalachian Songs* (Elektra EKL 122), Larry Richardson on *American Banjo* (Folkways FA 2314), The Folk Singers (Elektra EKL 157), The Kingston Trio (Capitol T 996), and Barbara Dane in *Folk Festival at Newport - Vol. II* (Vanguard VRS 9063). Paul Clayton's closely-related song, under the title "The Hustling Gamblers," can be heard on *Cumberland Mountain Folksongs* (Folkways FA 2007).



Tell me how can I ever stand it,
Just to see those two blue eyes.
They're shining like a diamond,
Like a diamond in the sky.

Sometimes I have a nickel,
Sometimes I have a dime,
And it's sometimes I have ten dollars,
Just to buy Little Maggie some wine.

Now she's marching down to the
station,
Got a suitcase in her hand,
She's going far to leave me,
She is bound for some distant land.

Pretty flowers were made for bloom-
ing,

Pretty stars were meant to shine
Pretty girls were made for boys to
love,

And Little Maggie was made for mine.

Well the first time I seen Little
Maggie,
She was sitting by the banks of the sea,
Had a forty-five strapped around her
shoulder,
And a banjo on her knee.

Sittin' On Top Of The World

Another song that has been covered by a wide variety of artists, from Doc Watson to Liverpool FC!

Hard Times

Not only are there lots of versions of this song, there are lots of different songs with the same title, plus lots of derivative songs with different titles! From the first hearing to the last this has been the stand-out track for me, and two versions that must be the same song are to be found by:

A.) George Mitchell (Presumably Black & White Minstrel Show collections)

B.) Sons Of The Pioneers on *radio Transcriptions Volume Two*.

On both of the above the song is entitled: **Hard Times (Come again mo more)**.

Step It Up & Go

You can find this on John Hammond's *Frogs For Snakes* and the Everly Brothers's *Instant Party*. There is something naggingly familiar about this that I've been unable to pin down yet.

Arthur McBride

ARTHUR MACBRIDE AND THE RECRUITING SERGEANT

Me and my cousin, one Arthur MacBride
As we went a walking down by the seaside
Now mark what followed, and what did betide
For it being on Christmas morning.

Ah, for recreation we went on a tramp
And we met Sergeant Knapper and Corporal Vamp
And a little wee drummer intending to camp
For the day being pleasant and charming.

"Good morning, good morning", the sergeant did cry
"And the same to you, gentlemen", we did reply
Intending no harm, but just to pass by
For it being on Christmas morning.

But says he "My fine fellows, if you would enlist
It's ten guineas in gold I will slip in your fist
And a crown in the bargain to kick up the dust
And to drink the King's health in the morning."

"For a soldier he leads a very fine life
And he'll always be blessed with a charming young wife
And he pays all his debts without sorrow or strife
And he always is pleasant and charming."

"And a soldier he always is decent and clean
In the finest of clothing he's constantly seen
Whilst other poor fellows go dirty and mean
And sup on thin gruel in the morning."

But says Arthur "I would not be proud of your clothes
For you only have lend on them as I suppose
And dare not change them one night, for as you know
If you did you'd be flogged in the morning."

"And although it is true we are single and free
We take great delight in our own company
And we have no desire strange faces to see
Although that your offers are charming."

"And we have no desire to take your advance
All hazards and dangers we'll barter on chance
For you would have no scruples for to send us to France
Where we would get shot without warning."

"Oh now," said the sergeant "I'll have none of that
And I will not take it from spalpeen or brat
For if you insult me with one other word
I'll cut off your heads in the morning."

Then Arthur and I we soon drew our hods
And we scarce gave them time for to draw their own blades
When a trusty shillie-lagh came over their heads
And bade them "Take that" as fair warning.

And their own rusty rapiers that hung by their sides
We flung them as far as we could in the tide
"Now take them out, devils" cried Arthur MacBride
"And temper their edge in the morning."

And the little wee drummer we flattened his bough
And we made a football with his row-di-dow-dow
Three it in the tide for to rock and to roll
And bade it a tedious returning.

And we having no money paid them off in cracks
And we paid no respect to their two bloody backs
For we lathered them there like a pair of wet sacks
And left them for dead in the morning.

And so to conclude and to finish disputes
We obligingly asked if they wanted recruits
For we were the lads that would give them hard clouts
And bid them look sharp in the morning.

Now me and my cousin, one Arthur MacBride
As we went walking down by the seaside
Now mark what followed and what did betide
For it being on Christmas morning.

Arthur McBride is recruited by Dylan

FOLK

◀ NEIL JOHNSTON ▶

REMEMBER Paul Brady's superb version of the Donegal anti-recruiting traditional song "Arthur McBride"? Course you do. He recorded it back in the 70s on that marvellous album he and Andy Irvine made.

Guitarists all over the land sat themselves down to learn the open tuning guitar accompaniment he used, although none could match his singing of it.

The song was requested so much at concerts that Paul eventually banished it from his stage repertoire and, to quote a line in one of the verses, "bade it a tedious returning".

All of which is part of folk history.

But now there has been an interesting, though not altogether surprising, development, in relation to the belligerent Arthur and his famous cousin.

For the song has been recorded by no less a singer/strummer than Bob Dylan, who has long been fulsome in his praises of Brady's work.

He is already doing "The Lakes Of Pontchartrain" live at concerts — Brady taught him the chords of that one down at Slane one year — and now he has included "Arthur McBride" on a new all acoustic album, his first for nearly 30 years.

I've had a chance for a pre-release listen to his version and he obviously has a copy of the Brady-Irvine album in the house. And it sounds good too, in the tried and trusted Dylanesque nasal whine.

Brady, who I understand is to be credited on the album (it's due out shortly) has not yet heard the Dylan treatment of the song, but he tells me he is looking forward to hearing what his illustrious pal makes of it.

From the singing of Paul Brady.

Recorded on the album "Andy Irvine & Paul Brady".

Transcribed by John Roberts, 9.10.92.

Tomorrow Night

This is after Arthur McBride on the official press release, but before it on the tape that I have. Whatever, it is best known from Elvis's version, I would guess, (it appears on at least four Elvis LPs), though a host of other people have recorded it; including Willie Nelson and Big Joe Turner. On both Willie Nelson's *Country Willie* and his *There'll Be No More Teardrops Tonight* it is preceded by *Take Me As I Am (Or Let Me Go)*.

You're Gonna Quit Me

Yes, well you all know I'm going to quote the Rev. Gary Davis here and his album, *Let Us Get Together*. Other than that I can add little, though you might wish to know that he has the word "baby" at the end of the title. Ok, too trivial, I agree. More importantly, I believe that Michael Gray may have traced the song further back, to Blind Blake. I await the outcome of his research with interest and may well stop my own after these few frantic days before publishing *Homer*. It is certainly interesting, but you wonder when it will all end and where it will lead you. In the search for versions of *Froggie Went A-Courtin'* I was still coming across nursery rhyme references in *under the red sky*, for goodness sake!

Diamond Joe

And pretty much a diamond of a song, but I know nothing more than it was on Jerry Garcia's *Almost Acoustic* - along with Deep Elem Blues, I've Been All Around This World and Oh, the Wind And The Rain.

Froggie Went A Courtin'

You have to hand it to Dylan, he sure knows how to end an album, the closing of this collection could not have had a more fitting last line. (The same could be said for so many albums, not least the two preceding this one.) Remember all those years ago when he mentioned he'd like to do a children's album? You knew he was toying with the interviewer but sensed it was a good idea - the Woody Guthrie connection, I suppose - and this is even better than *This Old Man*. I really love the way he sings it, no patronising, no condescension - straight and pure. It is ironic, really, that it has a politico-historical background, though not surprising. (It is often the case with the nursery rhymes alluded to in *under the red sky*, too.)

Actually I think the opening historical account is stretching things a bit, date-wise. If the earliest version, from Scotland, is the same song, surely it must have been adapted to be a satire on Queen Elizabeth's frolickings and fornications; unless the Royals were desperately seeking headlines even younger in those days.

A FROG WENT A-COURTING 1700

THIS SONG LANDED IN AMERICA ALMOST THE SAME TIME AS THE PILGRIMS. ALTHOUGH IT WAS FIRST printed in England in 1611 under the title "A Moste Strange Weddinge of the Ffroge and the Mouse," it was listed long before (actually 1549) in Wedderburn's *The Complaynt of Scotlande* under the title "The Frog Cam [came] to the Myl Dur [mill door]" and it was sung chiefly by the shepherds.

Despite the fact that our New England ancestors treated this as a sort of folk song, it has its roots in political satire as did the Mother Goose rhymes. It seems that Queen Elizabeth (1533-1603) gave her various suitors the amusing nicknames of animals: She called Sir Walter Raleigh her "fish," Leicester her "robin," the French Ambassador Simier her "ape," and the Duc d'Alençon was her "frog." This song refers to her romance with the Duke, which was so unpopular with her subjects.

Colonial New Englanders had no particular interest in the historical significance of this song and sang it only because they and their children liked it. Around the time of the Salem witchcraft trials, migrating New Englanders (1700) brought this song (and others) with them to their new homes in the Southern Appalachians, and for a long time afterwards the Blue Ridge mountaineers kept this song's popularity alive. During our period of national expansion (nineteenth century) this song spread over the entire country, and today there are hundreds of versions and verses.

A FROG WENT A-COURTING

Fairly bright

1. A frog went a-court - in', he did ride, a - ha, ho

ho A frog went a-court - in', he did ride, With

sword and pis - tol by his side, a - ha, ho ho

2. He rode till he reached Miss Mouse's door, aha, ho ho
He rode till he reached Miss Mouse's door,
Where he had often been before, aha, ho ho
3. He sat little mousie on his knee, aha, ho ho
He sat little mousie on his knee,
And said "Miss Mousie, marry me," aha, ho ho
4. She said "I will ask my Uncle Rat," aha, ho ho
She said "I will ask my Uncle Rat,
And see what he will say to that," aha, ho ho
5. Hence old Uncle Rat did ride to town, aha, ho ho
Hence old Uncle Rat did ride to town,
To buy his niece a wedding gown, aha, ho ho
6. Now where will the wedding supper be, aha, ho ho
Now where will the wedding supper be,
Down yonder in the hollow tree, aha, ho ho
7. The first to arrive was big Brown Bug, aha, ho ho
The first to arrive was big Brown Bug,
He drowned in the molassas jug, aha, ho ho
8. The next to arrive was Parson Fly, aha, ho ho
The next to arrive was Parson Fly,
He ate so much he nearly died, aha, ho ho
9. The next to arrive was big Tom Cat, aha, ho ho
The next to arrive was big Tom Cat,
He chased Miss Mouse and Uncle Rat, aha, ho ho
10. The last to arrive was Dick the Drake¹, aha, ho ho
The last to arrive was Dick the Drake,
Who chased the frog into the lake, aha, ho ho
11. Now go put the songbook on the shelf, aha, ho ho
Now go put the songbook on the shelf,
If you want more go sing yourself, aha, ho ho

1. "Dick the Drake" probably refers to Sir Francis Drake.

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There was a frog lived in a well With-a-ring-dum-bull-a-dum-a-coy-me

A mer-ry mouse lived in a mill With-a-ring-dum-bull-a-dum-a-coy-me

Coy-me-ne-ro-kill-to-care-o Coy-me-ne-ro-coy-me

Plim-slin-slammer-diddle, liddle-bull-a-ring-ting

A-ling-dum-bull-a-me-a-coy-me

- 1 There was a frog lived in a well
With-a-ring-dum-bull-a-dum-a-coy-me
A merry mouse lived in a mill
With-a-ring-dum-bull-a-dum-a-coy-me
Coy-me-ne-ro-kill-to-care-o
Coy-me-ne-ro-coy-me
Plim-slin-slammer-diddle, liddle-bull-a-ring-ting
A-ling-dum-bull-a-me-a-coy-me
- 2 This little frog he caught a snail
And rode between its horns and tail
- 3 He rode up to Miss Mouse's mill
And raised his voice both loud and shrill
- 4 O Mistress Mouse, are you within?
O yes, kind sir, I sit and spin
- 5 He took Miss Mouse upon his knee
And said: Miss Mouse, will you marry me?
- 6 O dear Mister Frog, I can't do that
Without the consent from my Uncle Rat
- 7 Uncle Rat he soon came home
With a hop and a skip on every stone
- 8 Uncle Rat, may I marry your niece?
Yes, kind sir, if you pay the lease
- 9 Then Mister Frog he went to town
To buy Miss Mouse a wedding gown
- 10 The invitations they were sent out
To all the neighbours round about
- 11 First to come was the little white moth
She spread out the table-cloth
- 12 Next to come was the bumble-bee
She danced a jig with the two-legged flea
- 13 Next to come was a great tom-cat
With his kittens small and fat
- 14 Last to come was a great big snake
He ate up all the wedding cake
- 15 Whilst they all at dinner sat
The cat gobbled up poor Uncle Rat
- 16 The kittens they collared the poor little mouse
Mister Frog he left the house
- 17 This little frog went down the hill
And swam across the brook to the mill
- 18 Across the brook came a little white duck
And swallowed him up with a quack-quack-quack

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Adolphus Le Ruez, Bonne Nuit, Jersey, Channel Islands, rec. P. Kennedy, 1956, BBC 25420

Other recorded versions

Elizabeth Cronin, Ballyvaughan, Cork, Ireland, rec. A. Lomas, 1951: *Uncle Rat Went Out to Ride*, BBC 11989
Annie Paterson, St Andrews, Mainland, Orkney, rec. P. Kennedy, 1955: BBC 22450 (has 'Ah-hum' chorus often found in USA versions)

Albert Beale, Kenardington, Kent, rec. P. Kennedy and M. Karpeles, 1954: *A Frog he would 'a-Wooing Go* (Anthony Rowley), BBC 21156

The above four versions are on *Folk Songs of Britain*, vol. X, CAEDMON TC1225/Topic 12T198

S. Ennis, Dublin, 1949: BBC 13774: *Uncle Rat*

Cecilia Costello, Birmingham: two verses only, BBC 17034 (1951) and BBC 19929 (1954)

Thomas Moran, Mohill, Co. Leitrim, Ireland, rec. S. Ennis, 1954: BBC 21900

Ben Baxter, Southrepps, Norfolk, rec. S. Ennis, 1955: fragment *A Frog he would 'a-woosing Go* (Anthony Rowley), BBC 22158

Jack Wesfer, Wexford, Ireland, rec. S. Ennis, London, 1955: BBC 22373

Printed versions

SHARPE: 1823, p. 86: *There Lived a Puddy in a Well*
CHAMBERS: 1826: quotes Sharpe version and Walter Scott MS, 1830

HALLIWELL: 1842: *Kitty Alone*

CHAPPELL: 1858-o, vol. II, p. 88: *The Marriage of the Frog and the Mouse*; quotes a ballad in *Melismata*, London, 1611

MASON: 1877, pp. 8-9: two variants, *The Frog's Wooing*

BARING GOULD AND SHEPPARD: 1895, No. 13: rewritten as *Kitty Alone*

SHARP MS: 1904-6: four variants (Somerset)

BARING GOULD AND SHARP: 1906: *A Frog he would 'a-woosing Go*

LEATHER: 1912, p. 209

JWESS: 1912, vol. 1, Pt. 4, p. 178: *'Y Broga Bach*

WILLIAMS: 1923, p. 133: *Froggy would 'a-woosing Go* (Wiltshire)

JESS: 1906, No. 9, p. 226: *Cuddy Alone* (Midlothians, from the Scott Collection); Anne Gilchrist, 1902

JEFDSS: 1946, p. 38: contains further notes by Anne Gilchrist

JEFDSS: 1953, p. 105: Mrs Costello's version, (Birmingham)

GUNDRY: 1966, p. 47: two-part version, 1939 (Cornwall)

WYMAN AND BROCKWAY: 1916, p. 25 (Kentucky, USA)

STURGIS AND HUGHES: 1919, p. 18 (Vermont)

COX: 1925, p. 470 (W. Virginia)

SANDBURG: 1927, p. 143 (Kentucky and Virginia)

WHITE: 1928, p. 218

MACKENZIE: 1928, p. 155 (Nova Scotia, Canada)

CRAIGHTON: 1932, p. 194 (Nova Scotia, Canada)

SHARP AND KARPELES: 1932, No. 220, p. 312: fifteen variants (S. Appalachians)

GREENLEAF: 1933, p. 90 (Newfoundland, Canada)

HUDSON: 1936, p. 282 (Mississippi)

SCARBOROUGH: 1937, p. 49

GARDNER AND CHICKERING: 1939, p. 455 (S. Michigan)

LINSCOTT: 1939, p. 199 (New England)

BELDEN: 1940, p. 494 (Missouri)

BREWSTER: 1940, p. 226 (Indiana)

This remarkable wedding was the theme of a song *The Frog Cam to the Myl-dur*, which was sung by shepherds in Wedderburn's *Complaynt of Scotland* (1549). 'A most strange wedding of the frogge and the mouse' was licensed in 1580 and later reprinted with a tune in *Melismata*. In D'Urley's *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1707) there is an early political parody called *A High Amour at St James*.

Anne Gilchrist (JEFDSS: 1946) draws attention to a common characteristic in that all the variant refrains have a strong accent on the first note: it seems to suggest 'an accompanying energetic gesture, or kick, when danced as well as sung—for it has the lift of the dance'.

A modern form of the song is perhaps better known than other traditional variants. It is Hooks' *A Frog he would 'a-woosing Go*, *Heigh Ho*, says Rowley, which has been recorded from traditional singers in Kent and Norfolk, and has appeared in collections by Baring Gould, Cecil Sharp and Alfred Williams.

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In a year that is rapidly becoming chock-full of landmarks and highlights, it is worth remembering the excitement we all felt when hearing that Dylan was performing *Idiot Wind*. It was a testimony to the power and importance of this song. It is no surprise, therefore, that most commentators have had much to write about it; one exception being Patrick Humphries in *Oh No! Not Another Bob Dylan Book*, who doesn't even give it a mention - perhaps we should be thankful. John Bauldie tries to retrieve the situation by quoting Dylan in his chronology at the back of that book:

I thought I might have gone a little too far with Idiot Wind. I might have changed some of it. I didn't really think I was giving away too much; I thought that it seemed so personal that people would think it was about so-and-so who was close to me. It wasn't. It didn't pertain to me. It was just a concept of putting in images.

Dylan has talked about the song in interview with Jonathon Cott for the *Rolling Stone*: the following exchange appeared in the January 26, 1978 edition:

- BDI don't think seriously about the past , the present or the future. I've spent enough time thinking about these things and have gotten nowhere.
- JC But didn't you when you wrote *Blood On The Tracks*? Why is it so intense?
- BD Because there's physical blood in the soul, and flesh and blood are portraying it to you. Will power. Will power is what makes it an intense album...but certainly nothing to do with the past or the future. Will power is telling you that we are agreeing on what is what.
- JC What about *Idiot Wind*?
- BD Will power.
- JC Why have you been able to keep so in touch with your anger throughout the years, as revealed in songs like *Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window?* and *Positively 4th Street* ?
- BD Will power. With strength of will you can do anything. With will power you can decide your destiny.
- JC Can you really know where your destiny is leading you?
- BD Yeah, when you're on top of your game.....Anger and sentimentality go right next to each other, and they're both superficial. Chagall made a lot of sentimental paintings. And Voltaire wrote a lot of angry books.
- JC What is *Idiot Wind*?
- BD It's a little bit of both because it uses all the textures of strict philosophy, but basically it's a shattered philosophy that doesn't have a title, and it's driven across with will power. Will power is what you're responding to.

And now, to the critics - the lyrics are at the end, courtesy of the B. Bowden book: *Performed Literature*.

Author: Don Williams	First Published: Fleming H Revell Co. 1985
Title: The Man, The Music, The Message	Currently unavailable

Perhaps the conclusion to Dylan's relationship with Sara and the failure of romantic love is given in *Idiot Wind* on *Blood On The Tracks*.

This whipping, crazy wind symbolizes the forces of chaos beyond Dylan's control. It blows through everything, bringing pain and ruin. The woman to whom he writes is an idiot, blown by the idiot wind. But in the last chorus Dylan, too, is blown by the same wind.

*Idiot wind
Blowing through the buttons of our coats
Blowing through the letters that we wrote
Idiot wind
Blowing through the dust upon our shelves*

*We're idiots, Babe
It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves*

What was it that really destroyed their union? Dylan writes of outside forces:

*It was gravity which pulled us down
And destiny which broke us apart*

but the ultimate cause lies in himself:

*You tamed the lion in my cage
But it just wasn't enough to change my heart*

Dylan's moral and religious renewal came together in the crisis of his near-fatal accident and in his marriage to Sara Lowndes. He gave Sara an ultimate devotion and gratitude which in its lyrical expression verges on worship. After the collapse of this center for his life there was nothing. He anticipated this in *Shelter From the Storm* when he wrote ... *nothing really matters much ill's doom alone that counts*.

Author: Robert Shelton	First Published: Beech Tree Books, (William Morrow) 1986.
Title: No Direction Home	Currently available

Idiot Wind: Generally acknowledged as the album's "big song." It has some of the sting of '*Rolling Stone*,' much of the anguish of Ginsberg's *Howl*. It could be a ranting truth attack, an expression of the narrator's personal disorder, ruefulness, and suspicion in an equally disturbed society in which people's spoken words are in apposition to their real emotions. There is also catharsis, a venting of personal anguish as well as a portrayal of a milieu where gossiping and backstabbing have replaced caring and believing. The ultimate horror is that the wheels have stopped; the air is fetid, paralyzing the body, mind and spirit. A man, or a couple, undergo harassment and collapse while Nixon and his family are under siege, in the denouement of the Watergate scandal.

Dylan insists we listen to a "primal scream," so that we will not be as naive as he. This song changed tremendously from its New York version, which had a different melody and even more direct personal links, but an almost benign setting and gentler delivery. This version's relentless shout has the impact of Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* - too true to bear, too close to the bone to accept. Yet these truths have to be faced before one can go on. Dylan leaves this version as he does some of his pessimistic songs: The wheel's start to roll again, the winds of plague will blow away, the helpless will learn to feed themselves.

Author: Geoff Dyer	First Published: The Listener, 28th May 1987
Title: Figured I'd Lost You Anyway	Reprinted: The Dylan Companion, Macmillan, 1990 (and slightly expanded)

....Second, in every piece the greatest lines and the most banal co-exist in such astonishing proximity that, as we listen, the latter actually take on some of the qualities of the former - but not vice versa. In memory the songs radiate from their best moments, but in the cold light of the printed page the pieces look so patchy that there seems something felicitous about the best lines *I can't help it if I'm lucky* as if they are better than they have any right to be, as if the critical instinct lags way behind the creative. No sooner have we formulated this idea, however, than we have to revise it, for Dylan's continual tampering with old songs usually improves them. The great national rhyme,

*Idiot wind, blowing like a circle around my skull,
From the Grand Coulee Dam to the Capitol*

made its first rather feeble appearance as:

*Idiot wind, blowing every time you move your jaw,
From the Grand Coulee Dam to the Mardi Gras.*

Difficult, though, to argue consistently about a talent so consistently inconsistent: other adjustments to the same song substantiate exactly the opposite view of such revisions. One of his best ever rhymes -

*Figured I'd lost you anyway, why go on, what's the use?
In order to get in a word with you
I'd've had to come up with some excuse*

only appears in the rejected version of *Idiot Wind*.

Author: Paul Williams	First Published: and books & Entwhistle Books, 1980
Title: What Happened?	Currently out of print

Idiot Wind, along with the pain-filled love songs and timeless histories on the album, is an affirmation - I wasn't sleeping those seven years, I was involved in the most intense and intimate and difficult scene any person can be a part of, a world that can't be spoken of or communicated while you're there ("marriage is the hottest furnace of the spirit today" Leonard Cohen, 1975) and at best can only be hinted at through the recriminations and regrets that erupt when it's over and broken and there's nothing to keep private any more. **Idiot Wind** touches on other relationships as well-business partners, audience/artist but its greatest triumph is its revelation of the fierce struggle implicit in the heart of even the happiest marriage. That the two should be one was never meant to be easy, and oh what can't be said does eventually build into an incredible head of pressure, which when and if it blows is far beyond any question of what you or I did wrong: we're idiots, that's all, insensitive louts, at best we can admit it and be friends, at worst we can resent it in each other forever.

Why did the marriage break up? Well, whoever we're talking about it wasn't because he did this or she did that. There's a deeper level.

Author: John Herdman	First Published: by Paul Harris Publishing, 1982
Title: Voice Without Restraint	Out of print

I thought **Idiot Wind** a masterpiece when I first heard it, and still find it a great song, but I am more aware now of qualifications that need to be made. It is a kind of **Desolation Row** of the spirit: whereas the earlier song deals with the interaction of society and self, the stress in **Idiot Wind** is more on the personal. Its tone is a new one: sour, abrasive and disillusioned, yet almost ecstatically so, almost celebratory, as in the lines: *I've been double-crossed now / For the very last time and now I'm finally FREE*, where Dylan nearly howls the last word. The title phrase is mouthed in a way that seems to give physical form to the idea: *You're an idiot, babe, / It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe*. The strength of the initial impact comes from the sheer enormity of Dylan's passion: the quality of wholesale vindictiveness has no parallel except in **Positively 4th Street**:

*You hurt the ones that I love best
And cover up the truth with lies
One day you'll be in the ditch
Flies buzzin' around your eyes
Blood on your saddle . .*

The attitude is however much more complex than in the earlier hate song; for one thing Dylan acknowledges a certain sense of shame which seems to be aroused as much by his own feelings as by his situation vis à vis the woman he is lambasting, a sense registered for instance by the image of his crawling past her door. Nor is he presenting a simplistic, black and white picture of the relationship:

*You'll never know the hurt I suffered
Nor the pain I rise above
And I'll never know the same about you
Your holiness or your kind of love
And it makes me feel
So sorry. . .*

This passage, though, localises the main weakness of the song. Dylan is uneasily aware here of something in himself which he "placed", with perfect artistic aplomb, in **Visions of Johanna**. For in the embarrassing first two lines just quoted he "brags of his misery", exactly like the little boy lost in that song. The parade of emotion is too close to self-parody for comfort, and the statement is uncharacteristically generalised. Moreover the self-dramatisation is not sufficiently confident to be carried off: he is too conscious of the need to be fair (something that never crossed his mind in **Positively 4th Street**), and achieves in the lines that follow an objective balance that is very uneasy and strikes us as a bit mechanistic, as if it were done out of duty rather than real feeling. Indeed the last two lines, coming in a song which has reached such heights (or depths) of vindictive intensity, are in danger of sounding insincere. I don't think they quite do so; but we remain uncomfortably aware of the danger that he has avoided by the skin of his teeth. This hump over, Dylan is able, in the final lines of the song, to take upon himself an equal share of the blame in a way that does not suggest hypocrisy:

*Idiot wind blowing through the dust
Upon our shelves we're idiots, babe
It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves.*

The change from the familiar condemnatory refrain of the previous verses is effective and moving; but it has been a close-run thing. The result is less perfectly achieved than with the similar device at the end of **One Too Many Mornings**; but then **Idiot Wind** is a very much more complicated and ambitious song.

As in *Visions of Johanna*, the "I" character is projected through various personas. In the first verse he is depicted, in a way that no doubt has autobiographical connotations, as a victim of press rumour, accused of shooting *a man named Gray* and taking his wife to Italy - this is the occasion for a characteristic shaft of bleak wit:

*She inherited a million bucks
And when she died it came to me
I can't help it if I'm lucky . . .*

The self-dramatisation extends in verse two to the association of his sufferings with those of Christ on the cross; while in the third a fresh persona is momentarily adopted in what I have been told (though I can't confirm it) is a reference to the film *Bonnie and Clyde*:

*I waited for you on the running boards
Near the cypress tree while the springtime turned
Slowly into autumn.*

The shifting, fragmented imagery is however held together by the consistency of the feeling and the uncompromising extremity of its expression, so that the song operates in a way which makes its flaws less important in practice than they look on paper.

=====

...The extent of the self-identification {with Christ} - we might almost say its effrontery - may not in itself advance Dylan's religious search very far, but it does help to explain its obsessive nature. In *Idiot Wind* Christ is seen (in lines which mix Christian imagery with something from a quite different source) as one who suffered but won through in the end:

*There's a lone soldier on the cross
Smoke pourin' out of a boxcar door
You didn't know it, you didn't think it could be done,
In the final end he won the war
After losin' every battle. . .*

The compensatory function of the habit is very apparent there; but it would be wrong to imply that the religious concern in these songs is merely a matter of personal psychology. Behind the autobiographical references and the personal recriminations lies an implicit critique of society which carries with it, yet again, apocalyptic connotations. The "idiot wind" blows not only from the mouth of the woman addressed but *like a circle round my skull from the Grand Coulee Dam to the Capitol*. The lines quoted above are preceded by these, which bring with them another reminiscence of *Desolation Row*:

*I ran into a fortune teller
Who said beware of lightning that might strike
I haven't known peace and quiet
For so long I can't remember what it's like...*

As in *Macbeth*, values have been reversed: *What's good is bad, what's bad is good*; while blasphemy is enacted by the representative of Christ's church on earth: *The priest wore black on the seventh day*, mourning the completion of god's creation rather than celebrating it.

Author: Stephen Scobie	First Published: by Red Deer College Press, 1991
Title: Alias Bob Dylan	Currently available

After the fictional flourish of its opening, *Idiot Wind* becomes an increasingly bitter and recriminatory portrayal of separation. The 'you' of the song is blamed for not knowing the singer better and for the *corrupt ways* that *have finally made you blind*. But again the separation is not absolute, and the song carries a subtext of hints at the merging of this 'you' and 'I'. The final verse states, *I kissed goodbye the howling beast on the borderline which separated you from me*: once the beast is kissed goodbye, it no longer guards this border, so the 'you' and 'me' can merge into the 'we' of the final chorus. The vicious invective of *You're an idiot, babe. / It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe* is modified to *We're idiots, babe, / It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves*. Nothing is forgiven, but the singer is prepared to accept a share of the guilt and responsibility.

Idiot Wind became progressively fiercer as it went through its various versions. By the time of the Rolling Thunder recording preserved on *Hard Rain*, it had become a rant, with very little room for this acknowledgment of complicity. But its earliest form is different. Several songs on *Blood On The Tracks* were recorded twice. The original tapings of September, 1974, were later replaced on the album by versions recorded in December. The September *Idiot Wind* is much softer, more forgiving and sympathetic, not so much in the words as in the performance. When Dylan sings, in lines deleted in the released version,

*You close your eyes and part your lips, and slip your fingers from your glove,
You can have the best there is, but it's going to cost you all your love,
You won't get it for money,*

the words may be sardonic and angry, but the voice is almost unbearably tender. The singer offers freely all the love it's going to cost.

Author: Elizabeth M Thompson	First Published: Conclusions On The Wall, Manchester, Thin Man 1980
Title: Dylan As Composer	Printed In : <i>Conclusions On The Wall</i>

Idiot Wind draws much of its power and explosive energy from these factors. The song crashes in on a C minor chord that is by no means alien to the tonic key of G major but certainly shatters expectations. The lyrical structure of declaration, narrative and chorus are paralleled in the melodic structure, which skilfully develops and extends melodic motifs. Inner key relationships are explored and only in the chorus is the harmony straightforwardly diatonic and defined. The musical content and Dylan's own performance are perfectly integrated, much more so than on the outtake version, so that on the finished album the song can emerge as the work of a mature artist.

Author: Alan Rinzler	First Published: Harmony Books 1978
Title: The Illustrated Record	Out of print

Idiot Wind presents a different side of the same story. There's no instrumental introduction, nossir, it starts right in with a savage burst of energy: *Someone's got it in for me . . .* Is that clear? Can you get the message: they're telling lies and even his "sweet lady" had *to ask me where it was at, I couldn't believe after all these years, You didn't know me any better than that.* Dylan's mad in this faster, more violent diatribe against IDIOTS who spread rumours about him. And who's he yelling at? Someone in the media who's been spreading lies about him; a personal friend who's betrayed him with fallacious gossip; a lover who's turned on him with a vengeance? Whoever it was, they were close once and now they're miles apart. Something just awful has happened between them and he's mad as hell, vindictive, nasty:

*Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your teeth
You're an idiot, babe
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe.*

The answer sure isn't blowin' in this particular wind. On the contrary, Dylan feels betrayed, double-crossed, and misled by misspent passion and devotion. In stark contrast to the regret of the previous songs and the desire for reunion, he now curses the day he ever trusted or loved this person:

*You tamed the lion in my cage
But it just wasn't enough to change my heart*

BUT . . . but in verse number four, the last verse of the song, he shows us even more of his vulnerability; he goes beyond just anger and hurting to show us how he blames himself, too, because what's true against her can be true against him, too:

*You'll never know the hurt I suffered
Nor the pain I rise above
And I'll never know the same about you
Your holiness or your kind of love
An' it makes me feel so sorry.*

So that at the conclusion he's calling himself an idiot, too. He confesses in blunt, hard-chosen words that he has to blame them both:

*Idiot wind
Blowing through the buttons of our coats
Blowing through the letters that we wrote . . .
We're idiots, babe
It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves .*

"Our coats . . . we wrote . . . ourselves . . ." And what a feeling of revulsion to provoke this inversion of the very words he used in his earliest masterpiece.

Author: Betsy Bowden	First Published: Indiana University Press, 1982
Title: Performed Literature	Currently out of print. (I think)

The rejected studio outtake of *Idiot Wind* has little company. Until recently Dylan had recorded live in the studio, intentionally releasing cuts that are not polished performances. (An example is the laughter and "All right, take two" that open **Bob Dylan's 115th Dream**, 1965). Because he seldom re-records a cut, few outtakes have made their way into the ever-vigilant bootleg-tape underground. From the 1962-63 *Freewheelin'* sessions come seventeen tracks that were not used on the album. But only **Corrina, Corrina** is a rejected performance of a then-released song; the rest are songs that did not appear on the album. From the 1966 *Blonde on Blonde* sessions survive six cuts performed with the Band (which does not accompany Dylan on the album.) Two of these cuts are fragmentary earlier versions of released songs: **Medicine Sunday** became **Temporary Like Achilles**, and **(Seems Like a) Freeze Out** became **Visions of Johanna**. But not until *Blood on the Tracks* do several outtakes survive that are full length, with similar words but different sound than in the performances released instead.

In September 1974, *Blood On The Tracks* was recorded in Columbia Studios, New York City, with the musicians credited on early prints of the album. Too late to change the credits before the scheduled release date, Dylan re-recorded five of the cuts in Sound 80 Studios, Minneapolis. The four outtakes besides *Idiot Wind* are interesting in several ways. For example, in the outtake **Tangled Up in Blue**, the narrator starts out as a third-person pronoun. He switches to "I" at the narrative point where his life re-intersects with the woman's, after their respective periods on the road, at *She was working at a topless place, and I stopped in for a beer*. In the released version the narrator is first person from the start. And in the Rolling Thunder Review performance in the film *Renaldo and Clara*, Dylan gives the pronouns yet another twist, to tell the start of the story from the woman's viewpoint. Of the five outtakes, though, *Idiot Wind* is the most changed in overall sound and most improved as a performance. Another version of *Idiot Wind*, in the Rolling Thunder Review concert on *Hard Rain*, relates to the released studio version as a re-interpretation, not as a better or worse performance. A close comparison of these three *Idiot Wind* performances--the released studio version, a released concert version, and a rejected studio outtake version--should bring us a bit closer to defining the aesthetics of rock, or anyhow of Dylan.

The lyrics of the more recent concert version differ slightly from those of the studio release. The words of the earlier outtake differ extensively, as transcribed separately at the end of this section. It seems a shame to have lost some of the earlier lyrics, especially:

*You close your eyes and part your lips
And slip your fingers from your glove
You could have the best there is
But it's gonna cost you all your love
You won't get it for money*

Dylan has said that a lot of lines come to him "that would be better off just staying on a printed page and finishing up as poems" (*Playboy* interview, March 1978, p. 82). Perhaps these outtake lines are among them. At any rate, before showing how its lyrics and performance have been altered and the song thereby improved, I will first describe the released studio version, for convenience termed the standard version. In *Idiot Wind*, many of the same elements interact that had made **Subterranean Homesick Blues** such an anthem for the mid-sixties, ten years before. Imagery intertwines personal life with political--but on country roads rather than city streets, with quite different priorities. Paranoia and defiance permeate each song, but "they" disappear after the first stanza of *Idiot Wind* as the narrator thereafter confronts his "Sweet lady" face to face. Rhyme, voice, and instrumentation go to enhance the sense of the lyrics in *Idiot Wind*, not to help destroy it. And the narrator, instead of dodging from basement to manhole, takes seven minutes and forty-five seconds to look around his life and piece together the fragmentary scenes. The end-rhyme scheme of *Idiot Wind* is flawless; the standard version instrumentation is regular and unobtrusive, always supporting the lyrics. It is thus a song whose words have more impact than does its music, on a listener's response, but it does not thereby become a poem. Much of its effect comes from Dylan's articulation of those words--from the way he growls "heart" or swallows "love" or grits "teeth." In addition, the scenes change without syntactic links, and the poetic images develop non-sequentially, unlike even a very impressionistic poem. **Subterranean Homesick Blues** has four eighteen-line stanzas, with refrains suggested only by irregular harmonica riffs after the slogan-like end couplets. *Idiot Wind*, far more slowly, glides also through only four stanzas, each made up of an eighteen-line verse and a seven-line refrain. Instrumentation and rhyme divide each verse into four-line segments, with an isolated line in the middle that rhymes with an isolated line at the end of each. Each verse end-rhymes ABCB, DEFE, G, HIJI, KLML, G. Each refrain develops the images of "idiot" and "blowing" by incremental repetition. Until the closing refrain, the first and last four refrain lines stay the same, only the middle refrain couplet changing its images of emptiness. For the last refrain other lines change too, such that the previous second-person accusation becomes a first-person-plural acceptance of blame. Except for a few tense shifts and plurals, all rhymes could work in print.

Even when Dylan's pronunciation changes a word, as in the third verse when he sings not "apart" but *apaarr*, he then rhymes it not with "heart" but with *haarr*. These unstrained, careful rhymes, as compared to all the voice-forced rhymes in **Subterranean Homesick Blues**, suggest a narrator attempting not to manipulate the world of the lyrics but to understand how and why its language works the way it does. The musical structure co-ordinates with the rhyme scheme. The melody repeats such that each eighteen-line verse is divided into two musical halves. Within each nine-line half-verse, the ABCB and HIJI lines pass slowly, their



end rhymes clear, because of the instrumental break after each rhyme word. In contrast, the *DEFEG* and *KLMLG* lines of each half-verse flow together without instrumental interludes. The *DEFEG* and *KLMLG* segments are further kept structurally distinct from the *ABCB* and *IIII* segments because of the organ, which regularly plays a high and then a low chord behind each of the *DEFE* and *KLML* lines. The words and music of the standard *Idiot Wind* begin simultaneously, with no instrumental introduction. For two lines Dylan's voice rushes ahead of the musical beat, suggesting the narrator's attempt to escape the someone who's *got it in for me*. The drum, the basic rhythm instrument, marks off two-measure segments, often co-ordinating closely with the vocals. In the instrumental break after the first C rhyme word, "lucky," the organ swells to join the drum, marking the song's first structural segment. These first nine lines tell what "they" say about the narrator. In everyday speaking we make distinctions among a definite "they," an indefinite but unthreatening "they," and what has been termed "the paranoid they"--like those hiding throughout *Subterranean Homesick Blues*.

The numerous "paranoid they"s in the first half-verse of *Idiot Wind* would start to sound silly in speech or print. But sung, the pronoun remains unobtrusive; its effect builds by repetition until the narrator is surrounded by hostile and gossiping "they"s. In this brief story, details sketch out the outlaw/hero/con artist/ stud image that "they" enviously fantasize about a famous person. Such a superman can casually shoot Gray, whose name suggests a bland, boring husband, and take Mrs. Gray to Italy, whose national reputation adds to the narrator's romantic appeal. The emotional power of this theme--seduction of a woman immediately after her husband's death--is shown by its centuries-long existence as a folktale sometimes known as *The Matron of Ephesus*. The theme here intensifies in that this woman, like Hamlet's mother, hastily marries her

husband's murderer. Perhaps Mrs. Gray even helped with the murder, but she gains only the narrator's company as he takes her to Italy to let her die there. She and then the narrator inherit a fantasy-laden million bucks, symbol of success. I did it, the narrator shrugs, with just luck--luck, the antithesis of hard work in the American dream. But despite this sarcastic disclaimer--which Dylan renders as *I can't HELP it ...IF...I'm luckeeeee*--the story implies that his success has come from romance. Sexual romance, a little ... but more the romance of the hero that American popular culture creates over and over--Stagolee, Billy the Kid, Capone, Bogart, Dylan.

Other lines in this first half-verse literally describe a rock star's public life--*They're planting stories in the press*, for example, though the next line's *cut it out* puns about the newspaper. Such literalness would fall flat without the accompanying evocation of the fantasy hero. The power of that hero image broadens the verse to lament not just stardom but also the dilemma of anyone who finds herself idealized and expected to live up to another's fantasy. This explanation provides a bridge to connect the media-hero imagery with the broken-relationship imagery in the first verse. The song itself has no such bridge. After two more couplets of what "they" think and do about the narrator, the scene switches to "you." *Even you yesterday*, Dylan sings softly and breathily. The alliteration of "yesterday" and "years" adds to the proliferation of "you"s, repeated in this *KLML* segment until the narrator is again surrounded, engulfed by this pronoun as he was a few lines earlier by "they." The last verse line reveals the pronoun's identity, with long-drawn-out *es: Sweet lady*. The line *You had to ask me where it was at* again shows Dylan foregrounding a cliché. The supplement to the *Dictionary of American Slang* (New York: Crowell, 1975) defines "where it's at" as "1: Where the exciting, trend-setting, successful, or satisfying events, people, ideas, etc., are, 2: Where the ultimate truth lies; where the unvarnished facts are." In slang the phrase is present tense. The past tense of Dylan's line implies that the asker regards "where it's at" as some permanent state that the narrator has been steadily in for all these years. Even in present tense, the phrase would suggest that the sweet lady idealizes him; in past tense, she is quite unable to understand how little he likes being where it's at. The slow *Sweet lady* and then a rich organ chord signal the start of the first refrain. Careful listening reveals that what at first sounds like "the idiot wind" is in fact "ihyidiot wihind" throughout, most clearly in the second refrain. The extra syllables make the oral phrase onomatopoeic: its five short-*i* sounds reverberate with *d-t-d* like gusty wind through a flap, whistling with the middle *w* sound.

Visual images of this sweet lady, like those of the sad-eyed lady of the lowlands, show mostly parts of her face, beginning here with her mouth. The mid-refrain couplet contains two powerful visual images of "blowing," set apart by the *Idiot Wind* before and after. Dylan holds the notes for "mou" and "sou," the latter somewhat longer, pronouncing neither final *th*. He increases the assonance of *you move your mouth* and slurs the sounds that the words do not share so that the phrase becomes something like *ya moo vya mowowow*. Word sound reinforces sense: although a silent reader might never notice, the consonant-diphthong combination *mow* forces a pronouncer, in fact, to move her mouth through a wider arc than does almost any other combination. In this couplet a third major pattern of imagery appears, with no more rational a transition than there was to the second, *Sweet lady* pattern. The transition comes by means of the aurally evoked wind, which now refers to both her empty talk and the lonely traveller heading south. A scene of southern backroads, with the wind, suggests dust and emptiness. In the blues, furthermore, men usually head north toward fantasized fame and fortune and head back south after they have failed. Thus, heading south means a

return to home and emotional security--usually symbolized as a woman. Dylan's juxtaposition of face and road imagery in this couplet works not only because of wind but also because of the all-forgiving and all-nurturing Woman that his sweet lady had apparently once meant to him.

There is still only resentment in the narrator's attitude and Dylan's voice, though--still no recognition that this blues-tradition female is as fantasized as is the heroic male he refuses to be. The words of the last three lines are identical and the performances similar, for the first three refrains--except that all vocal inflections become more emphatic in the second refrain, making it seem more hostile than the others. Dylan always renders "idiot" as "ihyidiot," even mid-line for each *You're an idiot, babe*. "Teeth" he usually draws out for four syllables; on the second syllable his vocal pitch shoots very high, then descends while overlapping most of the drum-riff interlude. To pronounce "teeth" aloud, one's lips must draw back as if to sneer, leaving the teeth exposed--to the wind, as it were --for the duration of the vowel. Dylan does not repeat this rendering for the rhyme "breathe"--he stretches its vowel only a little, staying on the same note but sinking in volume, and cuts off the word with a burst of breath, an articulated *th*. The narrator begins the second verse by switching from his resentful focus on the mouth, teeth, and breath of "you" back to a picture of "I." He is confused, out of control: if the fortune teller had said that lightning would strike for sure, he would feel less disoriented. Dylan's exclamatory tone isolates "beware," making danger seem certain but still undefinable. His voice becomes louder on the rhyme lines and softer on the lines between, imitating the "peace and quiet" the narrator names and the confusion he feels. And then, again without a syntactic tie, comes a clear, powerful, five-line vision of the lone soldier on the cross--who is, on one level, Woody Guthrie. An early poem of Dylan's ends:

*And your feet can only walk down two kinds of roads
Your eyes can only look through two kinds of windows
Your nose can only smell two kinds of hallways
You can touch and twist
And turn two kinds of doorknobs
You can either go to the church of your choice
Or you can go to Brooklyn State Hospital
You'll find God in the church of your choice
You'll find Woody Guthrie in Brooklyn State Hospital*

*And though it's only my opinion
I may be right or wrong
You'll find them both
In the Grand Canyon
At sundown*

(Last Thoughts on Woody Guthrie, *Writings and Drawings*, pp. 56, recited on a 1963 bootleg tape named 'Bob Dylan in Concert' Unreleased LP" on Sandy Gant's discography)

Guthrie's autobiography, *Bound for Glory*, inspired Bob Zimmerman to leave Minnesota for New York, to meet his dying hero and begin his own singing career. (See Scaduto, pp. 39 ff.) *Bound for Glory* is full of fight scenes; it opens with a free-for-all that spills out a boxcar door until Woody gets tossed off the train along with the fighters. Calling him a soldier instead of a scrapper glorifies him, as does the cross and its implication that Woody died for our sins. His lingering death is described by Mrs. Guthrie now (personal interview, January 1977), and presumably also when the young Dylan used to visit them, as a "losing battle" against Huntington's chorea.

The image does not end with Woody, however. Jesus Christ was no lone soldier, but medieval artists and writers found ways to add courage in battle to Christ's accumulated character assets (as he freed the righteous from hell or overturned money changers' tables). The same has come to folk heroes like Cuchulainn and Charlemagne: whatever his historical exploits, a hero lives on in oral tradition weighted by a snowballing mass of transferred traits and stories. The *lone soldier on the cross* suggests not only Woody Guthrie but also any rightfully glorified hero, such that the image stands in clear contrast to the sleazy con-artist hero of the first stanza. When *Blood On The Tracks* was released, my household in Santa Cruz was losing a war against an eviction-bent landlord. With no thought for how the lines relate to the rest of *Idiot Wind*, we promptly made a sign for our bulletin board of *In the final end he won the war, after losing every battle*. Dylan had done it again, had given us yet another slogan-like bulwark against whoever tries to control our lives. As in many proverbs, this couplet encompasses two mutually exclusive terms, winning and losing, and thereby provides a focus for unstated tensions. As my household used the line, "he won the war" meant "we will win the war," which we didn't. But a more numerous "we" were nonetheless winning a war after losing every battle. Dylan wrote this song not long before September 1974, probably during the Watergate summer. Again, most members of his audience would not have admitted rationally that the end of the draft and the war and the hard reign of Richard Nixon had done anything far-reaching to overthrow the capitalist system--but the need to celebrate was there. And these "won the war" lines of "Idiot Wind," set apart in the standard version by sharp drumbeats, suggest the mass community's covert cry of triumph.

This slogan raises listener responses so high that the fall to the roadside is very harsh. Dylan comes down hard on both syllables of "daydreaming." Daydreaming is not quite mutually exclusive of waking up but is askew enough to show the narrator still confused

after his vision. His waking vision, in contrast to the "lone soldier" dream, evokes the pain of a hangover or knockout headache. Dylan howls "stars" as *starrrr*, holding it longer than its rhyme word, "are." Hard drumbeats add to the pain. In the *KLMLG* segment, then, the narrator hurts his most direct accusations at the sweet lady, predicting her death with a vicious curse. *Cover up the truth with lies* directly evokes Watergate. The ditch in this scene reinforces road imagery elsewhere, for throughout the song (as in Woody Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads*) roads are lonely, wind swept, possibly dangerous, certainly not beckoning to fun and freedom. The eyes of the corpse reverberate with the sweet lady's facial features elsewhere. The bloody saddle--an image that Dylan combines with a road image to entitle the album *Blood On The Tracks*, "tracks" suggesting both railroads and footprints of the wounded--recalls Gray, slain so casually by the fantasy hero. It also suggests menstrual blood, an aspect of the mysterious power of the Female that echoes other of the narrator's attitudes toward his sweet lady--her holiness in the last verse, for example, and the narrator's patient waiting for her while the seasons run their cycle.~ In performance, this powerfully worded curse does not stand out. Dylan's voice becomes soft and breathy for "I love best" and a bit louder for "in the ditch"; he also pronounces the word "around" as a circle, mouthing its ow diphthong. But compared to the venomous voice that Dylan can use--and does use as nearby as the next refrain's *You're an idiot, babe*--his voice remains steady and unemphatic, as does the instrumentation. The curse sounds less resentful than it looks on paper--automatic, almost sad. By the rhymed couplet of the second refrain, the rotting corpse in the ditch has turned into one of the more pleasant possible images of death, flowers on a tomb. The next line brings the sweet lady back to life, in the secure home that billowing curtains suggest.

In this refrain Dylan exaggerates the drawn-out, sneering pronunciation of "ihyidiot" and the four-syllable, four-pitch "teeth." His vocal bitterness purges the narrator's resentment and enables him to begin rationalizing. As the third stanza opens, the organ comes into prominence, backing up the narrator as he shifts blame away from the sweet lady and onto uncontrollable forces of gravity and destiny. After "apart" and "heart" the organ holds a chord over the usual drum riffs. Dylan leaves off the *t* and growls the final *rrr* of each B-line rhyme, blending it into the organ chord. His growl makes good aural sense out of the lion, which in print seems an arbitrary image of masculinity. The narrator now gives the sweet lady some credit for trying in the relationship: he blames not her but "it"--as impersonal as gravity and destiny --for failing to change his heart. He is not ready, quite yet, to accept responsibility for changing his own heart.

The wheel-of-fortune imagery in the *DEFEG* lines again suggests Watergate. Throughout *Idiot Wind* the narrator's attitude toward the sweet lady tends to be primary, with images that evoke his feelings sometimes taken from national politics. Here political flashes focus into a rather direct description of an American leftist's feelings during Watergate summer, when a government that had long been a solid symbol of evil suddenly split into bad guys and self-righteous good guys. The passage could also tell how Nixon himself felt. But it is not just historical commentary. With the oppositions of good/bad and top/bottom, the lines evoke the mental and emotional chaos of other situations, including a love affair going bad. And like the not quite opposites of waking up and daydreaming, like the fortune teller's tentative but alarming warning, the concept of *a little upside down* is even more confusing than if everything were clearly upside down. The organ imitates "upside down" with a high, looping run. The "you" with corrupt ways, like the "you" on top and bottom, can be understood as both Nixon and estranged lover. But the concept of blindness shifts the scene back to the face of the sweet lady. Corruption and blindness recall her corpse rotting in the ditch; now her face comes back to life, with eyes that can see but should not be trusted. Dylan's voice exclaims all three words "eyes don't look," making sure a listener notices those shifty eyes. An organ chord pulls the scene abruptly away from her face to a third-person vision of corrupted religion. The seventh day and the wearing of black as clergy and in mourning suggest religious ritual-- empty ritual, though, because this priest is unmoved by fire, whether of sacrifice or purgation or just wanton destruction. The burning building recalls the *smoke pouring out of a boxcar door*. But, in spite of *Bound for Glory*, the boxcar image gave more an impression of hobo cooking than of destruction. Thus this priest couplet implies the corruption of the ideals of the lone soldier on the cross and thereby the fragility of the narrator's vision of the rightful hero. In conjunction with the Watergate imagery, the priest passage suggests some ultimate death-bearing authority--capitalism itself, perhaps--unmoved by what superficially appears to be a climactic event. In addition, the priest's stone face affects how a listener experiences the sweet lady's face: her shifty eyes perhaps cover up some deeper hardness of heart.

This priest passage acts as a sort of catalyst for negative imagery, tying together death and authority and ceremony and fire and face. But it is not essential to what would be poetic development on paper nor dependent on the rest of the song for its impact. In its position it provides a third-person break between two more literal comments about the narrator's love relationship. The organ adds to the sinking feeling of the next couplet. While the narrator waits, apparently stood up for a date with the Eternal Female whose fertility marks the cycle of seasons, four organ chords descend as down stair steps. The images of *running boards* and *cypress trees* suggest a scene out of Faulkner, perhaps--anyhow, a scene that reverberates with the *backroads heading south* and that ends with Dylan's slowly drawn-out *oh* of "slowly" and *um* of "autumn." Without the instrumental break that usually separates verse from refrain, Dylan plunges ahead--imitating the narrator's impatience after the long, slow autumn. And now the wind has shifted; in the couplet it blows, not around her face, but around the narrator's skull. *Like a circle* suggests whirlwind, confusion; in Dylan's pronunciation, it also suggests *sucker round my skull*, perhaps a sinister, clinging snake. The next line--the only one in its position without "blowing"--in a few words again evokes the entire confusion of American politics. Woody Guthrie's song *Grand Coulee Dam* glorifies the U.S. government, in the guise of the New Deal, for providing flood control, electricity, industrial goods, and, most important, jobs for the people. Its imagery shows American government at its most benevolent-- bringing the crashing waters of the Columbia under control, useful and still beautiful. Dylan's mention of the Grand Coulee Dam calls up an idealization of government parallel to the idealization of Woody himself as hero. The geographical sweep of Dylan's line echoes Guthrie's best-known song, *This land is your land. . . from California to the New York island*. But the spiritual sweep is vaster still from that political attitude, possible in the thirties, to the present-day Capitol--especially to a Capitol sinking as distinctly as Dylan's voice does on the last syllable.

The last three lines seem milder than in previous refrains. "Teeth" is three syllables, not four, as Dylan's voice sinks evenly instead of shooting up and then down in steps. This inflection so much resembles the pitch change on the last syllable of "Capitol" that it and "teeth" become aurally related to one another as well as to their rhyme words, "skull" and "breathe." Again, the face of the sweet lady gets linked to what's wrong in Washington. The narrator then leaves politics behind for a quite literal, personal fourth verse. Dylan's voice is very soft and breathy on the first line; with "touch the books," he returns to normal volume. A looped organ run behind the word "read" further highlights this fresh image of loneliness. The male narrator is left behind, the woman gone away --a role reversal from the much more common blues theme of man leaving home and woman, and a situation set up elsewhere in *Blood On The Tracks*.

The image *I can't even touch the books you've read* shows a lover left alone in what was once home. Books would not mean home in the blues; the evocation works for the particular sociological subgroup that makes up Dylan's audience--young, white, and over-educated. (Sometime between a couple's moving in together and the marriage ceremony, for example, comes a degree of commitment symbolized by their combining books, getting rid of duplicate copies.) The narrator's humiliating crawl past her door sets up a contrast with his following her down the road to ecstasy, in both his posture and the home/road imagery borrowed so extensively from the blues. Dylan heightens the home/road contrast by making the road momentarily sound exciting and adventurous: *down the tracks* seems to bristle with exclamation points. *Road to ecstasy* he sings more calmly, but the image is enlivened by sharp drumbeats after. The line *And all your raging glory* continues this verse's extreme focus on "you," the sweet lady. Dylan draws out the "your," not the phrase "raging glory" which a silent reader would notice. After *very last time* he pauses, imitating the finality, and then goes on to exclaim *free!* An organ chord and sharp drumbeats punctuate the exclamation. The image of the *howling beast* on the borderline suggests maybe jealousy but more certainly whatever monster it is that destroys relationships. The organ becomes more prominent here, with a long chord to introduce the straightforward, sad statement that concludes the verse. The organ plays the same four stair step chords with which it had backed up the waiting lines that ended the third verse, but here it does the stair step faster, twice over, once behind *you'll never . . . rise above* and again behind *And I'll never . . . kind of love*. The descent imitates the sinking sadness of the lines, culminating in a "love" that Dylan chokes in like *luv*. The incremental repetition highlights the reciprocal thoughts that the two lines express. The final line has more words than does any other in its position, and in it Dylan's phrasing sets apart both "feel" and "sorry."

The fourth verse begins with the narrator's inability to feel her and ends with his ability to feel sorry about his inability. The narrator has learned how to feel but nonetheless has lost his sweet lady. In the closing refrain, the change in personal pronoun shows the narrator's new awareness of reciprocal feelings and shared blame. In the first two refrains "you" were wrong, in the third "I" was confused, and here in the fourth "we" are both cold, unprotected by what ought to cover one person adequately. The letters and the dusty shelves pick up on the image of books as home. And the narrator and sweet lady are still "ihyidiots," even together. *It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves*, as a closing, hints at mothering and nurturing. The parallel line in other stanzas, *It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe*, suggests, of course, death. This switch from not-breathing to not-being-fed is the same shift of imagery as in the third refrain, from "tomb" to "room," death to home. Here, as so often elsewhere, death and motherhood combine into a powerful poetic image. The death threat is a vicious line made milder, in all three refrains, by Dylan's tone of regret: each time he sneers "teeth," and then he does not fulfill the aural expectation that "breathe" too will be sneered. No listener has experienced death, not-breathing--she can only imagine it, fearfully, like the narrator in early verses. However, every listener does have subconscious memories of the time when she could not feed herself, when she did need another person as this narrator once needed his sweet lady and she him. Dylan's soft and mellow harmonica comes in to accompany the band through an entire refrain and fade-out. Here as elsewhere, especially because of the final mothering image, Dylan's voice-like harmonica seems to imitate an infant learning to talk, whose highest aspiration is to sound like a human voice, who has no desire whatsoever to rush off proving what an instrument can do that a voice cannot.

In contrast to the voice-centered, word-centered nature of this standard *Idiot Wind*, the concert version released on *Hard Rain* features Dylan's voice as one among many instruments. True, his voice continues throughout the song, whereas musical instruments instead take turns in the spotlight. In the first stanza guitar and tambourine are most noticeable; the piano takes over in the second and continues through much of the third. A glockenspiel enters at the third verse, then also highlights the *ABCB* lines of the fourth. The drum predominates throughout the fourth verse and refrain, it and again the tambourine becoming louder toward the end.

Besides this variety of instruments, and besides the occasional raggedness of an unedited performance, the most marked difference between the standard version and this one is the distinctive percussion riff that fills the musical spaces between many sung lines. It is a two measure, syncopated riff, its rhythm 𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅. Its fourth beat is marked by a chord change on guitar and usually by a shivering tambourine stroke (i.e., one produced by sideways wrist motion). This riff is usually repeated twice after each *B* line and more often in the longer instrumental breaks between verse halves, between verses and refrains, and between stanzas. Each of these instrumental gaps predicts what will happen during the next sung line. That is, a *B*-rhyme line of lyrics, accompanied by a *G* guitar chord, is followed by two instrumental riffs--the first changing *C* to *C*-minor, the second back to *G* and again to *C*-minor--and then by the next sung line, accompanied by a *C*-minor chord. Instrumental gaps are active to start with, because of the chord changes in this repeated riff, and are further enlivened by instrumental flourishes. In the first stanza, for example, a loud electric-guitar figure follows each line *I can't help it if I'm lucky* and *People see me all the time*. The change after "lucky" seems to rise in pitch; that after "time" seems to fall. Thus these two consecutive lines, though not a poetic couplet, are made by instrumentation into an incrementally repeated couplet in binary opposition. After the "sweet lady" line that ends the first verse, three quickly ascending guitar pitches imitate a climb upward into the "Idiot wind."

In the second stanza, fast repeated piano chords come in at the *HHH* lines such that the instrumentation continues to pound at the narrator, who has just been awakened by sharp drumbeats after *losing every battle*. In the concert version, his painful visions show not a "chestnut mare" - but a "smoking tongue," which new image combines fire and face imagery. The *Blood on your saddle* curse that follows, however, makes less complex poetry than in the standard version: *One day you'll be in the ditch* becomes, in concert, *One day you'll be in the grave*, no longer linked to the road imagery.

Other changes in concert may affect the sense of the lyrics. For example, the standard *I haven't known peace and quiet* seems more peaceful than does the concert *I haven't known about peace and quiet now* packed into the same musical space. The most extensive textual changes come in the *BCB* lines of the last verse, which become in concert:

*I can't even touch the clothes I wear
Every time I come into your door
You leave me standing in the middle of the air.*

The lyrics are then the same as in the standard version until *I think I finally see*, in place of *now I'm finally free*. *I can't even touch the books you've read*, eliminated in concert, elaborated the home/road imagery, as did *crawl past* and *free*. And the concert narrator's *I finally see* somewhat blurs the blindness/vision imagery since all along he has been seeing what the bloody-socketed sweet lady does not. *Your corrupt ways have finally made you blind*, the third-stanza line that refers neatly to both Nixon and the sweet lady, is in this concert version highlighted by loud glockenspiel tones during and after. The glockenspiel returns briefly and more softly in the fourth verse, as do guitar and piano flourishes, before sharp tambourine strokes and loud drumming, including cymbal crashes, finish the song.

The last verse of the outtake lyrics, I will show, methodically resurrects each of the song's major patterns of poetic imagery. In this concert version, instrumentation creates a similar effect: during the final verse each instrument says one more time that no one of them is the most important, that each will take its turn. And because of the distinctive instrumental riff, whose chord change seems to be predicting a line to follow even at the close of the song, it seems that all these congenial instruments will continue their co-operative progress though the words are over and done with. Dylan's voice, pronouncing those words, tends to echo the patterns set out by instrumentation. For example, two of the distinctive instrumental riffs follow each B-line rhyme word, and for each, beginning with *preyess* and *gueyess*, Dylan emphatically makes the rhyme two syllables. Also, he frequently upswoops his vocal pitch within words, particularly line end words; such a rising pitch gives an unsettled feeling that more will follow, as do the chord changes in those instrumental riffs. Dylan's unusual vocal phrasing particularly stands out in this concert version because at least one other singer joins in during each refrain. While that voice aligns with the musical beat, Dylan's voice usually strays far from both, the voice (or voices) and the beat. In the first *Blowing every time you move your mouth*, for example, when the other vocalist arrives at the *m* of "mouth," Dylan is already well into mouthing its reduplicated *ow* diphthong. For the last line of every refrain--the "breathe" lines and then "feed ourselves" at the end--the other vocalist (s) and all instruments stop. Dylan sings each line a cappella, coming down hard on every other syllable, *It's a wonder that you still can e-ven buh-reeethe*. This vocal effect could be termed sarcastic iambic pentameter, done with little regard for the sense of the lyrics. With his voice, thus, Dylan can choose to exaggerate or ignore normal English-language rhymes and other vowel/consonant sounds. His voice in this concert version does what it damn well pleases among potentially regularizing influences. When a vocal effect does relate to the sense of the lyrics, it often seems sarcastically over-dramatic: for example, he seems to sob during *I can't feel you anymore*. Dylan's unpredictable voice interacts with the instrumentation throughout this concert version, for instruments trade off flourishes and backup rhythms in no particular order. The lyrics likewise shift around scenes and images of lovers, politics, publicity, heroes, roads, homes, books, faces, fires, tombs, rooms, and wombs--connected by gusts of the idiot wind. The word-centered studio performance seems to unify these themes; all are part of one narrator's consciousness as he tries to sort out his life. This instrument-happy concert performance, instead, makes the scenes in the lyrics even less connected than they look in print. But disunity doesn't matter, it's alright ma, because the narrator is part of a congenial



community of instruments that feel just as chaotic as he does but that will help him past this personal crisis just as the feeling of group solidarity has helped him past so many others.

Insofar as a listener identifies with each narrator, a listener to the *Blood On The Tracks* version feels rather sorry for herself. But what listener could feel sorry for herself out there cheering a Rolling Thunder Review concert in Fort Collins, Colorado? A listener to the rejected studio outtake version feels sorry for the organist. After every single line that contains the word "wind" or "blowing," twenty in all, the organ does a wind imitation: "woo-oo-oooo-o." It imitates wind also after the narrator daydreams *about the way things sometimes are*. The organ also overdoes the descending stair steps of chords, like those that back up "I waited for you on the running boards" and a few other appropriately down-spirited lines of the standard version. In the outtake, descending organ chords back up lines much more frequently, sometimes detracting from the sense of the words. For instance, such chords behind *losing every battle* make losing, rather than winning, primary. The dream slogan is not as high spirited, so the narrator does not fall with a crash to wake up on the roadside. Or again, an organ swell behind the third-stanza *DEFEG* segment, vaguely imitating *Now everything's a little upside down*, is less effective than the looping organ run that imitates "upside down" in the standard version simply because dramatic organ flourishes are so commonplace in the outtake. The drum defines the basic rhythm in the standard version; in the outtake, the drum stays well in the background, leaving the acoustic guitar almost alone to begin and end the song, to make transitions between structural segments, and to define a regular musical beat-- with which Dylan's voice could possibly be setting up tension. Only occasionally and gently, though, does his voice indulge in unusual phrasing or inflection. The overall effect of this outtake performance is of softness, gentleness, a calm steady emotional state throughout.

The outtake lyrics differ extensively from the standard ones. (See lyrics, with variants, at the end of this section.) These earlier lyrics express consistent resentment toward the sweet lady, the only hint of reconciliation or shared blame coming in the switch to first-person-plural pronouns for the last refrain. In spite of the harsher words, however, the musical and vocal performances make the outtake a gentle, non-threatening love song. This clash in tone could conceivably have produced an overall effect, of confusion between love and exile, home and death, similar to the unresolved tension between the lyrics and the performance of them in *Shelter from the Storm*. (The released *Shelter* was recorded at the same New York sessions as was the outtake *Idiot Wind*.) But the outtake misses this artistic possibility and mostly seems monotonous. The guitar opens the song with a few measures of the riff that will both back up and follow sung lines throughout. Dylan sings each of the four opening lines ahead of the musical beat, here too suggesting the narrator's paranoia and his attempt to escape. The entire first outtake verse and refrain have lyrics not changed. In the *man named Gray* story, Dylan's voice exclaims the word "died" and pauses afterward. The fantasy hero thus seems crueller: the key word "lucky," which Dylan's phrasing links to "inherited" in the standard version, here is connected to the seduced woman's death. For the phrase *where it was at*, Dylan uses the soft, breathy tone otherwise used for professions of love. The line *Sweet lady* has no stretched vowels as in the standard; the following guitar part swells in volume, however, and leads into Dylan's louder voice on *Idiot wind*. Dylan reduplicates the vowels of this and other "Idiot wind"s but less emphatically and consistently than in the standard version.

The lyrics of the second verse are much altered: the narrator in the outtake lyrics is more in control of his situation. Instead of running into a fortune teller, he takes the initiative to seek out a prediction. The personification of *peace and quiet* here, creating a clearer visual image, also implies that the narrator is out seeking peace and quiet. And that picture is then made fuzzy by the indefinite "it," which refers to his state of mind but seems also to equate *peace and quiet* with *living hell*. The outtake's *lone soldier on the hill* suggests a World War I hero; the move from "hill" to "cross" gives him two more millennia of heroic meaning. Whereas the standard version's "smoke" and "boxcar" suggest companionship, the possibility of heroic hobo society, the outtake rain isolates the lone soldier. Rain is an isolated image in the song, too, muddying the idiot wind that everywhere else seems dry and dusty and biting. Because a listener's spirits are not buoyed up by the sinking *losing every battle* slogan, next, she does not fall hard and fast to the roadside. The *hoof-beats pounding in my head* create more immediate pain than does the isolated *chestnut mare* image that replaces them. But the "your" that refers to that chestnut mare connects the headache directly to the sweet lady; in the outtake, the juxtaposition of glorious-hero vision and painful-lady vision is less striking. The curse lines in the outtake, as in the standard, have little impact in inflection or instrumentation. The third verse begins with an unemphatic shift of blame onto impersonal forces. The only word that Dylan stretches is "enough"; the outtake thus lacks both the anguish and the lion's growl of *apaarr* and *haarr*.

The organ swell behind the "upside down" lines, next, becomes louder behind "bottom" but fades quickly so that the usual guitar riffs follow the words. Dylan changes the lyrics of the last half of this third verse, leaving only the priest image relatively intact. In the replaced ceremony lines, the narrator does not focus on her changed face. Instead, a whole new scene is sketched. The "bags" suggest unwanted burdens that she leaves him, in contrast to the narrator's own light luggage later, when he packs up his uniform. The outtake priest, juxtaposed to this ceremony passage, waltzes around instead of sitting stone faced--a vivid character change in two words. The narrator switches back to the sweet lady to say that she cannot be trusted; this blunt statement has less poetic impact than does the standard version's glimpse of her shifty eyes. And by converting the outtake "quickly" to "slowly," Dylan reproduces the cycle of seasons in the love relationship, adding to the ritualistic overtones of the passage. The outtake image of the narrator left behind with all her bags, but no more her and not even any help, expresses somewhat the same feeling of sinking hopes as does the standard version's image of waiting by cypresses, backed by descending organ chords. The waiting image has the poetic advantage, though, since it is linked to the *backroads heading south* and thence to the ever-present wind. The couplet of the third refrain has also been altered drastically, in only a few words. The wind in the outtake version shifts only from her mouth to her jaw; the image neither suggests a whirlwind of confusion nor anticipates the narrator's gradual acceptance of blame. The use of "Capitol" instead of the outtake "Mardi Gras" has enriched the song's meaning considerably. The revision focuses the Watergate imagery, and it not only echoes Woody Guthrie's most famous line but also re-evokes his heroic nature and expands that attitude

onto New Deal politics. (Dylan's outtake *From the Grand Coulee Dam to the Mardi Grass* simply puts specific names to Guthrie's *From the redwood forests to the Gulfstream water*.) The distance from the Grand Coulee Dam to the Capitol implies a spiritual distance, a political discrepancy, a once-praiseworthy government gone bad, the fall and breakup of the American dream. "Mardi Gras," the romantic but arbitrary image in the outtake, resurfaces in one of the other cuts re-recorded in this session, *Tangled Up in Blue*, in which one scene switches from Los Angeles to New Orleans.

The fourth verse, its lyrics totally changed for the standard version, contains several memorable lines. In particular, the triplets that end *struck me kinda funny* and *You won't get it for money* seem succinct, emotion packed images for a relationship going bad. By changing this verse to a more gentle and direct statement, one of regret, Dylan has chosen to sacrifice flashes of aphoristic cynicism to the song's overall emotional development. But I have been saying all along that a song, unlike a poem, affects its audience not by linear development but instead by letting a listener experience the emotions it evokes without transition in time or rationality.

Until one begins analyzing the printed lyrics, one does not notice that the standard *Idiot Wind* narrator is cruel at the beginning, has a heroic vision, gradually admits his own confusion, and becomes gentle and sorrowful at the end. A listener instead simultaneously experiences all these emotional states, plus those of Watergate, Italy, cypresses, and so on, for a song can create in a listener a mixture of feelings within a moment of time--within the pulsation of an artery, as Blake says. The development of emotional mood during the course of the standard *Idiot Wind* makes it work better in print than does the outtake. But because these are songs, not poems, the overall emotional effectiveness of the two versions might have remained constant. The added gentleness in the revised lyrics could have been balanced, in a listener's comparative experience, by the outtake's gentler instrumentation throughout. The poetic inferiorities of outtake lyrics, considered independent of performance, are minor--a few isolated images and muddled effects. Overall, the artistic fault of the outtake is in the tired monotony of its instrumentation and of Dylan's voice.

The last verse of the outtake picks up on and expands each of the earlier strands of poetic imagery so that a listener experiences each emotion one more time before the narrator's abrupt switch to first person plural acceptance of blame in the refrain. The first line of the verse uses a cliché that could have acquired a Dylanesque twist had he used "fell" instead of "jumped" in the next line: *We pushed each other a little too far/And one day just fell into a raging storm*. This image would pick up on "gravity" earlier . . . but mine is not to rewrite rejected Dylan lines. The "raging storm" (which becomes "raging glory" later in the standard fourth verse) suggests the idiot wind itself and perhaps the "raindrops" of the second outtake verse. The hound dog, baying in the outtake, turns into the revised "howling beast" and the phrase *hounded by your memory*. The uniform he packs up is in contrast to the bags she left behind and also recalls the second stanza's lone soldier. In the *DEFEG* lines, syntax sets into opposition "word" and "excuse," implying something like truth v. hypocrisy; this oppositional effect increases as a listener experiences the clearer love v. money contrast that ends the verse. The terms "double-crossed" and "lost my mind" say in ordinary, dead metaphors what scenes earlier in the song said by implication: "double-crossed" tells how the narrator felt after the ceremony, and "lost my mind" puts him back in the ditch hallucinating. The lady killers and dice recall the "lucky" narrative of the first verse and perhaps her bloody corpse. In performance Dylan breaks this line firmly before *behind my back*, which phrase he ties to the next line's *imitators steal me blind*. This complaint literally, with a re-awakened cliché, describes a rock star's life, as did the first verse images. In the standard version, blindness becomes an attribute of the sweet lady and Nixon and the corpse in the ditch, simultaneously; this outtake line's blinding of the narrator as well is less effectively integrated into previous imagery patterns. The last half of the fourth outtake verse focuses on the sweet lady, reminding us that the song's imagery patterns go together to express the narrator's feelings about her. The details are carefully chosen--her eyes and lips, instead of fly ridden and idiot wind blown, now become unmistakably seductive. Most of the song has pictured her face; the stripping of her hand in this passage makes narrator and listener suddenly aware of the rest of her body.

In the standard version, the last image of the sweet lady names her holiness; her appeal is romantic and mothering, as well, but never as overtly sexual as in the outtake. In the *MLG* lines of the last outtake verse, her sexuality turns into a mirror image of female prostitution: love and money, in structural opposition, imply that she would pay money for "it." The text, although not Dylan's voice particularly, suggests a sneering, egotistical narrator. For this last *KLMLG* segment, however, Dylan's voice expresses more than it has throughout the song. He misses the beat for "You" that begins the *K* and *M* lines; his voice rushes to catch up with the music, imitating the narrator's distraction as he stares at her closing eyes and parting lips. Dylan sings the seductive "glove" line softly and breathily and uses a similar tone for *all your love*, then, cynically, he uses the same breathiness for "money." The organ's wind imitation continues unabated through the last refrain. Dylan's phrasing helps the organ with its too-clear message, for his vocal pause after the last "Blowing" leaves the wind, not the shared blame, primary for a listener. He ends the lyrics abruptly: *feed ourselves* is run together, Dylan's voice dropping quickly in pitch to end the completely articulated word before its musical beat. The guitar continues its usual pattern. Dylan's harmonica comes in also, for an entire half-verse and a refrain, complete with wind imitation. Several times the harmonica plays the end of the melody of *The answer is blowing in the wind*; for the instrumental refrain, though, it returns to a close reproduction of the sung melody of *Idiot Wind*. Everyone playing seems sleepy. I have pointed out some specifics of why this outtake *Idiot Wind* is artistically inferior to both the *Blood On The Tracks* and concert versions. Beyond the kind of poetic considerations I have suggested in connection with this and with the rough draft of *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, what generalizations can be made about artistic improvements in performance? Paul Griffin's wind imitations are a drawback. Is direct instrumental imitation of the lyrics always artistically boring? No--there is plenty on *Blonde on Blonde*, which Dylan considers his most successful studio album, and especially on the exuberant 1974 concert album. Overdone instrumental imitation is bad--but how much is overdone?

In the outtake *Idiot Wind*, the lyrics express bitterness and the music, reconciliation. But instead of mismatch, the effect might have been of unresolved tension, as in *Shelter from the Storm*. In this outtake, Dylan's voice is relatively uninteresting. But in *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, vocal monotony creates major artistic effectiveness. "To Generalize is to be an Idiot," says William Blake. Much more evidence is needed to even begin consideration of the aesthetics of performance, or the aesthetics of rock, or even just the aesthetics of Dylan, from the performer's point of view. Somewhat more evidence is available on aesthetic standards from the audience's point of view, however, as I show in my next chapter. Different as *Subterranean Homesick Blues* and *Idiot Wind* are in tempo and in relative positions on a words-to-music spectrum, their wind-related imagery patterns occur within texts that both can be analyzed for the characteristics of successful songs: pronouns that can encompass a listener, extensive rhyme and other vowel/consonant patterns, non-sequential development of ideas and images, and so on. In neither song, however, are binary oppositions in the text--allowing flexibility in performance--a striking feature. It could be said that *Subterranean Homesick Blues* does not in fact allow various meanings in performance: Dylan apparently never sang it again in public, and cover versions tend to change text and structure drastically. Disconcertingly, however, *Idiot Wind* can project at least two aesthetically successful meanings in performance, and the scattering of non-quite-oppositional images in its text ("day-dreaming," "a little upside down," and so on) creates just one effect among many. Even more disconcertingly for one of my theses, Dylan has eliminated several oppositional images in improving the outtake text for release. Yet binary oppositions do play the roles I have analyzed elsewhere: in imitating the *Hard Rain* narrator's struggle toward rational understanding, in portraying love-song women as irrationally appealing, in making *Just Like a Woman* a jagged weapon and *Like a Rolling Stone* a personal victory for each listener, and in allowing *It Ain't Me, Babe* so many possible resolutions. Does successful literature intended for oral performance somehow use more binary oppositions than does other literature? Or is it inertia that has kept most literary critics from seeking paradigmatic structural patterns as such in what is intended for silent reading? Is unresolved ambiguity more characteristic of songs than of spoken literature? Would distinctions appear between works intended for oral delivery and for silent reading by the same author?

*Yes, and how many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind
The answer....*

(1962)

Author: Alexander/Gross	First Published: Elm Tree Books, 1978
Title: An Illustrated History	Out of print

Idiot Wind was an epic, a searing look at the price paid for fame, intensely personal, universal for just that reason, as Dylan sings of *the pain I rise above*, a losing warrior who awakes to find himself a victor, soiled, wary, and a little vengeful. The fight was not just with his audience, his friends, his wife. Rather it was with life, as it had always been with the very best of Dylan's songs. If it ended with a verse about love, all the better, for there, in the misunderstandings between two people, was where Dylan always found his most telling situations.

Author: Elizabeth M Thompson	First Published: <i>Conclusions On The Wall</i> , Manchester, Thin Man 1980
Title: Dylan As Composer	Printed In : <i>Conclusions On The Wall</i>

Idiot Wind draws much of its power and explosive energy from these factors. The song crashes in on a C minor chord that is by no means alien to the tonic key of G major but certainly shatters expectations. The lyrical structure of declaration, narrative and chorus are paralleled in the melodic structure, which skilfully develops and extends melodic motifs. Inner key relationships are explored and only in the chorus is the harmony straightforwardly diatonic and defined. The musical content and Dylan's own performance are perfectly integrated, much more so than on the outtake version, so that on the finished album the song can emerge as the work of a mature artist.

Author: Wilfrid Mellers	First Published: Faber and Faber Limited, 1984
Title: A <u>darker</u> shade of pale	Out of print (I think)

Author: Unknown	First Published: <i>The Guardian</i> , 8/2/75
Title:	Reprinted In: <i>The Dust Of Rumour</i> (Dave Percival)

There's even some confusion in the finest track of all, an extraordinary outburst called **Idiot Wind**. It begins with what seems like silly personal paranoia (*Someone's got it in for me, they're planting stories in the press*), then on to unlikely fiction (*they say I shot a man called Gray and took his wife to Italy*) before exploding into one of the most brilliant, brutal choruses that Dylan has written.

A screaming chunk of fury, piled up with a jumble of surreal imagery and hints of influences back to Woody Guthrie, it can be taken as an all purpose anthem against mediocrity in the media and the collapse of America's idealism. It's Ginsberg's *Howl* revisited, and it marks Dylan as a sixties survivor, bruised but not down.

Author: David Pichaske	First Published: Peoria; Ellis Press, 1981
Title: <i>The Poetry of Rock</i>	Out of print

Idiot Wind is as angry, bitter, as scornful, as dark as anything that preceded *John Wesley Harding*. The song, moreover, self-contempt, as the final refrain makes clear: *We're idiots, babe, it's a wonder we can even feed ourselves*. Content, tone, form, music, delivery: almost pure *Blonde on Blonde*.

Author: Dowley & Dunnage	First Published: Tunbridge Wells: Midas, 1982
Title: <i>From A Hard Rain To A Slow Train</i>	Out of print

Idiot Wind, the most powerful song on the album, combines a mixture of rage, anger, remorse and frustration. The 'wind' here must be a deliberate reference to the earlier **Blowin' In The Wind**, but its effect is different. It no longer gently blows answers:

*I haven't known peace and quiet for so long
I can't remember what it's like*

A destructive wind, then, that blows where it will in a fatalistic manner. For it was 'destiny which broke us apart'. Both people have been affected by it:

*We are idiots, babe,
It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves*

But Dylan cites an example of someone who won through in the face of opposition:

*There's a lone soldier on the cross...
.....In the final end he won the war,
After losing every battle*

Author: Michael Gray	First Published: St. Martin's Press, 1981
Title: <i>The Art of Bob Dylan</i>	Reprint and expanded version of <i>The Song and Dance Man</i>

Seen first as a sort of **Positively 4th Street Revisited**, it is the album's most successful song. The too-personal bone-scraping jars:

*Someone's got it in for me
They're planting stories in the press...
I haven't known peace and quiet
For so long I can't remember what it's like...
You'll find out when you reach the top
You're on the bottom...*

It also produces, in Dylan, a need to step back from that extra-personal quality somehow: and he does so in the wrong way, by stylizing his delivery of the anger, so that his voice at those points comes across with a faked-sounding passion.

Yet this is a small element in the song. It deepens into one of infinitely greater emotional range than a **Positively 4th Street**. The idiot wind that blows is the whole conglomerate of things which assail our integrity and of love that renders us hapless and out of control. The song locks us in a fight to the death, in a contemporary graveyard landscape of skulls and dust and changing seasons. Destruction and survival again.

The pre-occupation with this just-possible survival one must fight for is urged most eloquently in this tremendous, evocative stanza:

*There's a lone soldier on the cross
Smoke pourin' out of the box-car door*

*You didn't know it
You didn't think it could be done:
In the final end he won the war
After losing every battle...*

That is matched, later in the song, by the extraordinary tugging wildness of this - a triumph of poetic strength:

*The priest wore black on the seventh day
And sat stone-faced while the building burned
I waited for you on the runnin' boards
'Neath the cypress tree while the springtime turned
Slowly into autumn:
Idiot wind
Blowin' like a circle around my skull
From the Grand Coulee Dam to the Capitol...*

(And what a rhyme!)

Author: James E Dorman	First Published: Soma Press of California, 1982
Title: Recorded Dylan	Currently unavailable

Next a long (7:45) masterpiece, **Idiot Wind** - another Dylan "revenge" song, the negative side of the love/hate relationship. He looses a bitter diatribe against all that is negative in his life : His betraying lover; a one-time personal friend; his audience; the media and, finally, against himself. The number opens abruptly:

*Someone's got it in for me
They're planting stories in the press;
Whoever it is, I wish they'd cut it out quick,
When they will, I can only guess.*

And he tells his "sweet lady":

*Idd-iot wind,
Blowing every time you move your teeth;
You're an idd-iot babe,
It's a wonder that ya still know how to breathe.*

Anyone who can unleash the bile spilled with this piece will never be in need of an analyst to probe his subconscious. Lines like: *One day you'll be in the ditch! Flies buzzin' around your eyes* - this is true catharsis. Finally, he focuses the hatred inward: *We're idiots, babe! It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves*. The old Dylan viciousness returns, railing against others as well as indulging in some heartfelt self-hatred.

Author: Clinton Heylin	First Published: New York; Summit Books, 1991
Title: <i>Behind The Shades</i>	Currently available

Dylan proceeded to re-cut six of the songs...Unfortunately, not only did he re-record the songs, he also re-wrote them...In the case of **Idiot Wind** only the first verse remained largely intact, and the new version was less personal, more ambiguous. Though the Minneapolis version may have had more sound, it had less passion. The understated delivery of the New York version had actually seemed to add to the venom of the words.

Author: John Hinchey	First Published: Wanted Man, Manchester; 1983
Title: Bob Dylan's Slow Train	Out of print

..Recall that image from **Idiot Wind**, which tells us that the *borderline that separated you from me* is guarded by a *howling beast*. In terms of this image, the task is to convert this beast from an obstacle into a vehicle for crossing, and the dangers are that the gospel impulse will collapse into an effort to traverse the border by slaying the beast, and that the blues impulse will collapse into the effort to secure the border by becoming the beast.

Author: Steven Levy	Free Times, Philadelphia; 24th Sep. 1976
Title: Shelter From The Critics' Storm	Reprinted in the 1978 & 1981 Tour Programmes

Of course, the closing anthem of *Hard Rain*, had to be *Idiot Wind*. And here, Dylan was at his best, his voice swirling and howling over the crunch-thump hurricane of the Rolling Thunder. Significantly, he warned the second person of the song – in this case, the American public – that one day you'll be in the grave (not, as first sung, the ditch) and those flies buzzing around your eyes will be a fitting tribute to the uselessness of your television lies, of your *People Magazine* sensibilities.



Author: Jonathon Cott	Doubleday, 1984
Title: <i>Dylan</i>	Presumably out of print

But the grace, lightness and humour of this song [*You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome, When You Go*] is as much a foil as is the poison and spleen of *Idiot Wind* – which exemplifies in Rimbaud's elegant phrase, 'the refraction of grace crossed with a new violence.' While *Idiot Wind* was the most obviously explosive and bitter work Dylan had released since *Positively Fourth Street* and *Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window?* it was also the first such song in which he incriminated not only the person he was singing about but himself as well: *We're idiots, babe – It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves*

Any emotion lived out in full, it has been said, is a form of love. And in *Idiot Wind* Dylan does nothing less than materialize a moment of wrath which, if not made visible and exorcised, will feed on the soul it destroys. *I kissed goodbye the howling beast / On the borderline which separated you from me* – while also seeing political evil as an extension of interpersonal hatred. *Idiot wind / Blowing like a circle around my skull / From the Grand Coulee Dam to the Capitol*

Author: Mark Carter	Homer, the slut
Title: The Winds of Change and the Pain I Rise Above	Issue Seven!

Idiot Wind is one of those Dylan songs that I have always considered a "classic" without really ever giving any lasting attention to. It first appeared in 1975 on *Blood On The Tracks*, made a dramatic reappearance in 1976, kind of hovered around as an outtake or two (most notably on *The Bootleg Series*) but has remained criminally ignored by Dylan for the best part of 15 years. Consequently, it's a number that always moves me somehow whenever I hear it, but it's absence from any live tapes since '76 has meant that it kind of fades from view for me far more so than, say, 'inferior' songs such as *It Ain't Me, Babe* or *Boots Of Spanish Leather*.¹ Until now.

The word in February 1992 that Dylan had begun performing *Idiot Wind* live in Australia didn't really fill me with much excitement or great anticipation. I had images of half-remembered lyrics and a lack-lustre delivery; a once classic song rendered impotent by the passing of time. Consequently, I was pleasantly surprised when the first tapes revealed Dylan to be performing it extremely well; a delicately emotional performance with Dylan seeming to actually live the song rather than plod through it as a concert curiosity. Subsequent tapes have proved it to be the highlight of 1992, even taking into consideration the other gems that have surfaced this year such as *Little Moses* and *Female Ramblin' Sailor*.

Dylan has made a stunning return to form this year (actually beginning last Autumn), and is currently performing with a commanding style and grace far exceeding any glory that any of us should have a right to expect this far into the game. To hear him actually sing every song with renewed vigour is a never-ending joy to these ears, and made 1991's Spring /Summer gigs pale into insignificance.

I now view Dylan's performances of *Idiot Wind* in three stages. Firstly, the original, written in 1974 as he tried to repair his rapidly deteriorating marriage, seems dignified - yet desperately, and mournfully, angry. An anger soaked in remorse as he realised that the relationship with his "sweet goddess" was strained almost to the point of breaking. The outtakes appear somewhat more gentle on the surface, yet the same feeling of desperation is still apparent, weaving in and out of every line.

The 1976 Rolling Thunder Revue version is quite simply vicious, as Dylan, realising that the marriage was truly over, uses the song as a weapon of spite rather than a lamentation of a husband and wife who realise that they can no longer live together. The *Hard Rain* video contains one of the most powerful Dylan performances I've ever seen, and, even though Dylan shakes his head in grief as he sings the line *And it makes me feel so sorry* (though I have heard one theory that he is shaking his head in refusal of the line. In other words, it doesn't make him feel so sorry), it's still quite clear that he intends to neither forgive or forget. Little wonder, then, if she saw this or other performances, that Sara was forced to run and hide. People call *Like A Rolling Stone* and *Positively Fourth Street* scathing and vicious, but nothing in Dylan's vast body of work is so devastatingly furious as this. *You hurt the ones that I love best*, Dylan snarls, ironically doing the same thing himself with a song once so full of grief and now so full of spite.

In 1992 Dylan sings it as a sad, reflective song - an old man looking back on a traumatic event in his life with regret and wistful disappointment. To say that he caresses every word, every syllable, is nothing of an understatement. Despite the increasingly improving shows (and they are still getting better as the weeks roll by), this song continues to remain the absolute treasure on every tape that I've heard. Dylan can't help but remember what was happening in his life when he wrote it, and the fact that he feels comfortable enough to sing it again after all these years obviously means that he has come to terms with - or resigned himself to - his past.

To date, my favourite performance is on the San Jose 9/5/92 tape, an excellent DAT recording of a tremendous show, where Dylan changes the melody and enunciation of the chorus ever so slightly (something he had tried to do at some former shows, but not always successfully) and really lets the song soar. It's a tremendously moving performance, quite heartbreaking and yet absolutely mesmerising.

I would be happy to leave the article here, but can happily add a postscript. At the recent Cambridge society meeting I was fortunate enough to see the Fox Warfield 5/5/92 video, including a stunning *Idiot Wind*. Some of the fire and anger of '76 seemed to have been fused with the more nostalgic new version, and it was a sheer joy to watch Dylan deliver the song with 101% commitment. It was the most powerful, rivetting piece of video that I've seen in years, and left me speechless and moist-eyed. Tears of joy, I hasten to add, and of relief. Relief that the man is most definitely back, most definitely in control and in contact with whatever it is that can still ignite the spark of genius that's in him. Back doing what it is that he does best. Again.

So I'd like to thank Bob Dylan for delivering his most consistently impressive set of gigs (now almost nine month's worth) since at least 1980, maybe even as far back as 1975. I'd especially like to thank him for re-introducing me and - more importantly himself - to one of his greatest and, apparently, most enduring songs. A song that continues to improve and reveal new depths every time he sings it, long after I thought I had it pinned down in the great scheme of things.

Whatever Dylan does, and wherever he goes, in the future I'll always have *Idiot Wind* in 1992. God bless him for that.

Clearly it's a not-so-ill wind that blows everybody some good.

¹ I only use the word 'inferior' in the context of *Idiot Wind* being more gut-wrenchingly honest than many other 'lost love' songs that Dylan has regularly performed live throughout his career.

"Idiot Wind" (c) 1974, 1975, Ram's Horn Music): Studio Version from *Blood on the Tracks* (Col. PC 33235). Recorded 27 or 30 December 1974 at Sound 80 Studios, Minneapolis, released January 1975. with Chris Weber (twelve-string guitar), Ken Odegard (guitar), Greg Inhofer (keyboards), Bill Peterson (bass), Bill Berg (drums).

[Textual variants for:] Concert version from *Hard Rain* (Col PC 34349) Recorded 23 May 1976 in Hughes Stadium, Fort Collins, Colorado, released September 1976. With Rolling Thunder Review, including some or all of Scarlet Rivera (violin), Rob Stoner (bass and vocals), Steven Soles (guitar and vocals), Howard Wyeth (piano and drums), T-Bone Burnette (guitar and piano), Gary Burke (drums), David Mansfield (guitar). Producers, Don DeVito, Bob Dylan; engineer, Don Meehan.

Separate transcription for: Studio outtake bootleg, from Columbia A&R studio, New York City, mid-September 1974.

IDIOT WIND

Someone's got it in for me
They're planting stories in the press
Whoever it is I wish they'd cut it out quick
But when they will, I can only guess
They say I shot a man named Gray
And took his wife to Italy
She inherited a million bucks
And when she died, it came to me
I can't help it if I'm lucky

People see me all the time
And they just can't remember how to act
[I guess they just can't remember how to act]
Their minds are filled with big ideas
[Their minds are filled with false ideas]
Images, and distorted facts
Even you, yesterday [And even you, yesterday]
You had to ask me where it was at
I couldn't believe after all these years
You didn't know me any better than that
Sweet lady

Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your mouth
Blowing down the backroads heading south
[Blowing on down the backroads . . .]
Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your teeth
You're an idiot, babe
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe

I ran into the fortune teller
Who said beware of lightning that might strike
[She said beware there's some lightning that strikes]
I haven't known peace and quiet
[I haven't known about peace and quiet now]
For so long I can't remember what it's like
[For so long I don't even remember what it's like]
There's a lone soldier on the cross
Smoke pouring out of a boxcar door
You didn't know it, you didn't think it could be done
[He didn't know it, he never thought it could be done]
In the final end he won the war
[But in the final shot he'd won the war]
After losing every battle

I woke up on the roadside
Daydreaming about the way things sometimes are
[Daydreaming about the way things really are]
Visions of your chestnut mare
[Visions of your smoking tongue]
Shoot through my head and are making me see stars
You hurt the ones that I love best
And cover up the truth with lies
One day you'll be in the ditch
[One day you'll be in the grave]
Flies buzzing around your eyes
Blood on your saddle

Idiot wind
Blowing through the flowers on your tomb
Blowing through the curtains in your room
Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your teeth
You're an idiot, babe
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe
[It's a wonder that ybu still can even breathe]

It was gravity which pulled us down
And destiny which broke us apart
You tamed the lion in my cage
But it just wasn't enough to change my heart
[But it wasn't enough to . . .]
Now everything's a little upside down
As a matter of fact, the wheels have stopped
What's good is bad, what's bad is good
You find out when you reach the top
You're on the bottom
[You are on the bottom]

I noticed at the ceremony
Your corrupt ways had finally made you blind
[That your corrupt ways . . .]
I can't remember your face anymore
[I can't recall your face anymore]
Your mouth is changed, your eyes don't look into mine
[Your mouth is changed and your eyes . . .]
The priest wore black on the seventh day
And sat stone-faced while the building burned
I waited for you on the running boards
Near the cypress tree while the springtime turned
Slowly into autumn

Idiot wind
Blowing like a circle around my skull
From the Grand Coulee Dam to the Capitol
Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your teeth
You're an idiot, babe
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe

I can't feel you anymore
I can't even touch the books you've read
[I can't even touch the clothes I wear]
Every time I crawl past your door
[Every time I come into your door]
I been wishing I been somebody else instead
[You leave me standing in the middle of the air]
Down the highway, down the tracks
Down the road to ecstasy
I followed you beneath the stars
Hounded by your memory
And all your raging glory
I been double-crossed now
For the very last time and now I'm finally free
[For the very last time and I think I finally see]

I kissed goodbye the howling beast
On the borderline which separated you from me
You'll never know the hurt I suffered
Nor the pain I rise above
And I'll never know the same about you
Your holiness or your kind of love
And it makes me feel so sorry

Idiot wind
Blowing through the buttons of our coats
Blowing through the letters that we wrote
Idiot wind
Blowing through the dust upon our shelves
We're idiots, babe
It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves

Outtake Version

Someone's got it in for me
They're planting stories in the press
Whoever it is I wish they'd cut it out
But when they will I can only guess
They say I shot a man named Gray
And took his wife to Italy
She inherited a million bucks
And when she died it came to me
I can't help it if I'm lucky
People see me all the time
And they just can't remember how to act
Their minds are filled with big ideas
Images and distorted facts
And even you yesterday
You had to ask me where it was at
I couldn't believe after all these years
You didn't know me any better than that
Sweet lady

Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your mouth
Blowing down the backroads heading south
Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your teeth
You're an idiot, babe
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe

I threw the I Ching yesterday
It said there might be some thunder at the well
Peace and quiet's been avoiding me
For so long it seems like living hell
There's a lone soldier on the hill
Watching falling raindrops pour
You'd never know it to look at him
But at the final shot he won the war
After losing every battle
I woke up on the roadside
Daydreaming about the way things sometimes are
Hoofbeats pounding in my head
At breakneck speed and making me see stars
You hurt the ones that I love best
And cover up the truth with lies
One day you'll be in the ditch
Flies buzzing around your eyes
Blood on your saddle

Idiot wind
Blowing through the flowers on your tomb
Blowing through the curtains in your room
Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your teeth
You're an idiot, babe
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe

It was gravity which pulled us in
Destiny which broke us apart
You tamed the lion in my cage
But it just wasn't enough to change my heart
Now everything's a little upside down
As a matter of fact the wheels have stopped
What's good is bad, what's bad is good
You find out when you've reached the top
You're on the bottom
I noticed at the ceremony
That you felt all your bags behind
The driver came in after you left
He gave them all to me and then he resigned
The priest wore black on the seventh day
And waitzed around while the building burned
You didn't trust me for a minute, babe
I've never know the spring to turn
So quickly into autumn
Idiot wind

Blowing every time you move your jaw
From the Grand Coulee Dam to the Mardi Gras
Idiot wind
Blowing every time you move your teeth
You're an idiot, babe
It's a wonder that you still know how to breathe

We pushed each other a little too far
And one day just jumped into a raging storm
A hound dog bayed behind your trees
As I was packing up my uniform
I figured I'd lost you anyway
Why go on, what's the use
In order to get in a word with you
I'd had to come up with some excuse
And that just struck me kinda funny
I've been doublecrossed too much
At times I think I've almost lost my mind
Ladykillers load dice on me
Behind my back while imitators steal me blind
You close your eyes and part your lips
And slip your fingers from your glove
You could have the best there is
But it's gonna cost you all your love
You won't get it for money

Idiot wind
Blowing through the buttons of our coats
Blowing through the letters that we wrote
Idiot wind
Blowing through the dust upon our shelves
We're idiots, babe
It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves.

An Appreciation Of The 1976 Tour

Man! I just don't believe this. Those are audience sentiments overheard after the third song on my tape of the first concert (Lakeland 18 April 1976) of this extraordinary tour. Hardly surprising, this reaction, given that the fortunate individual had just seen Dylan kick in with a tender and echoing solo **Visions Of Johanna** (what an ambitious opener - never to be heard again on the tour); followed up with a vengeful and vindictive rewrite of **If You See Her Say Hello**, and then a duet with Neuwirth on **Vincent Van Gogh**, which, although it became a 1976 feature, must've been new to this unknown commentator and his companion. An idiosyncratic and adventurous opening - and next up was **Weary Blues From Waitin'** - another rarity. It must be an exciting experience to attend the opening night of a tour; one filled with heady anticipation, even though Dylan has often needed a few shows to get his eye in. But the Lakeland faithful couldn't have been disappointed judging from my, admittedly poor quality, tape.

The magic of an opening night is captured brilliantly in Simon Winchester's essay on Chicago '74, *Blowin' In The Windy City* ("**The Dylan Companion**"). Although those who attended Verona in 1984 may still be somewhat sceptical. Whatever the truth of this, Lakeland '76 certainly comes across as an exciting opening to what was to be a vibrant series of shows.

JUDGES AND JOKERMAN

This article was prompted by a letter I received from Andrew singing the praises of Orlando '76 and claiming that this was an undeservedly unappreciated tour, possibly because it stands in the shadow of the awesome 1975 Rolling Thunder Revue. Having always personally appreciated this tour, I felt impelled to try and respond appropriately. The first question you might want to ask is whether it actually is unappreciated? If true, I hope to demonstrate that it is undeserved that it should remain that way. In *Stolen Moments*, Clinton Heylin writes: "The whole 1976 leg of the Rolling Thunder Revue meets with considerable apathy from crowds and critics alike, despite being one of Dylan's very finest tours". Now this is a controversial statement to make, is it not? Assuming young Clinton was not lucky enough to attend any of the 1976 shows, then his laudatory words must be based on available tapes plus the **Hard Rain** album (not a good example of the breadth of Dylan's achievement on the tour) and the **Clearwater** and **Hard Rain** TV shows. One might ask who he is to set himself up above the crowds who actually experienced Rolling Thunder Two at first hand? This neatly links up with a letter to **Homer 6** from a friend of mine, Mike Jackson. Mike is scathing about Mark Carter's criticism of Hammersmith '91, and bases his case on the fact that he was at Hammersmith and was therefore in a better place to judge than Mark who only had access to the tapes. My guess is that Mike would still accept Clinton's evaluation of '76 even though it contradicts his criteria about "the right to judge". I don't want to get into the debate about Hammersmith (I wasn't there either), but I do think the 1976 tapes prove, if it's not self-evident, that you can make a judgement about a concert or tour without having been there.

Let's go back a little further first. A famous, well-known and appreciated tape is **Hallowe'en 1964**. Thousands of fans who never attended any 1964 shows would (I feel sure) assert that Dylan was in fine form on that night - and that it is a good example of the Dylan of that era. You don't need to have been there - you can hear the magnetism of Dylan's personality, the warmth of his relationship with the audience, and from his performance you can tell that he was in good voice and at the top of his form. Why don't you need to have been there? Because Dylan's art is aural not visual. It is certainly a pleasure to be there and to see what is going on and to soak up the atmosphere. But it is the sound (and lyrics of course, but I don't need to say that do I?) that matters. His art lies in the interaction of lyrics, musical instruments and voice - all of which is available to us on tape and can mostly be appreciated even on poor quality recordings. I might add that I would never choose a video of a particular show over an audio tape: there is rarely any comparison in terms of sound quality.

The crux of this debate lies in the fact that it is happening at all. I don't believe that you would've said at any time between 1964 and, say, 1986, that you had to be there to appreciate how good he was. All the evidence you needed was there on tape. The fact that anyone feels they need to defend Dylan's performance on these grounds now, can only be an indication that there has been some slippage of late. But what can you expect really? He is 51 years old now. I would simply ask: is anyone whose art demands a physical input still at their best at such an age? Is it fair of us to expect that much from someone who has already given far more than we deserve? In the end it comes back to whether we are entitled or allowed to make judgements about art at all. An argument which denies the legitimacy of drawing distinctions regarding the relative merits of different tours detracts from both our and Dylan's humanity. It also asks the impossible. Implicitly it is saying to us that there is no variation in quality, only in content and style. It is saying that Dylan and The Dead '87 is as good as Dylan and The Band '66. And yet we know, (don't we?) that the quality of his performance varies from night to night within tours, let alone from one tour to the next. We have the evidence of our ears. We don't have to be there to judge.

YOU GOTTA LOTTA NERVE

Going back to 1976 though, is it an unappreciated tour and is it true that the audiences at the time were "unimpressed and bored" (Heylin)? A related question is: do disappointing ticket sales necessarily indicate that a) the shows were poor, or b) that those who did attend were less than enamoured of what they heard? In the case of a) manifestly they do not. Popularity has never been a guarantor of quality or artistic merit. The reverse must also be true - that which is good, which has integrity and merit, need not be popular. As for those who attended, well we have the evidence of our eyes and ears. We get some clear pictures of a rain-drenched crowd on the **Hard Rain** film. Despite the weather, they exhibit every sign of both enjoying themselves and appreciating the show. It seems reasonable to assume that at least one concert satisfied its audience. We also have audio tapes. The nature of their proof may be ambiguous. The crowds sound enthusiastic on the tapes I have, but they may only be the few people near to the recording device. It is not an absolute guarantee that this was the common reaction. I suppose the balance of probability is that if crowds had really enjoyed the shows, word would have spread across the South and ticket sales would have responded accordingly. Likewise, if it is true that Dylan became disenchanted with the tour it may be a further indication that he wasn't receiving the audience reaction that he would've wished. Who became disenchanted first one wonders? (Reminds me of the Thurber cartoon: "I'm disenchanted, you're disenchanted, we're all disenchanted!") Then again, maybe it was just the critics. If they were generally negative towards the Revue, this could have had the double effect of discouraging ticket sales and pissing Dylan off. I suppose it is also possible that Dylan's "eastern-radical chic" credentials (which following **Hurricane** and **Joey** is probably how he was perceived), didn't actually endear him to the conservative rednecks from below the Mason-Dixon line.

Even assuming Dylan did become bored with the later stages of this short tour ("It was a tour of two halves really, Brian") that is not necessarily reflected on-stage. Certainly not with any frequency. There are still powerful and compelling performances right up to and including Fort Collins. And, oh, if I could only hear a tape of **Lily, Rosemary and the Jack Of Hearts** from Salt Lake City!

"Under-appreciated"? Well, such proof as exists is against me. **The Telegraph** readers' poll in 1990 placed this tour eleventh among favourite Dylan tours. I can't believe this is a true evaluation. If the aficionados don't rate it, what chance is there that anyone else does? But I really don't understand how anyone can consider 1988 superior to 1976, though many of you seem to. For crying out loud, he didn't even play harmonica in '88! Anyway, never one to accept a majority verdict, I'll try and tell you why 1976 means so much to me.

I'm a little hampered in this task by the fact that I am not a completist tape collector. I have about half-a-dozen tapes from each tour, which is all I really want. In addition, I have the **Clearwater** and **Hard Rain** videos. However, these are quite sufficient for me to love Rolling Thunder 2 and to demonstrate that the **Hard Rain** album paints its picture in a distorting mirror.

LAKELAND (18/4/76)

Let's look again at that Lakeland concert. In my introduction I said that the opening song, **Visions Of Johanna**, was ambitious, tender and echoing. It is all of these things and more. Listening to the official memoir of the tour - the **Hard Rain** album - you wouldn't know that he had sung in this warm and sensitive voice in 1976. The album is underrated generally, but it does sound the product of an angry individual. Nothing at all like this reading of **Visions Of Johanna**. In fact, if it were not for a greater maturity in the voice and a lesser impact on the harmonica, you could imagine you were listening to Dylan, circa 1966. Somebody has commented on the way Dylan uses space between his music and lyrics. I think this means that his technique is the opposite of Spector's "Wall of Sound". In other words, silence (varying in length and breadth) and distance in some strange way contribute to the sound and mood of the song. I find it hard to articulate, but I "feel" what is meant when I listen to Dylan. This particular version of **Visions of Johanna** is a good example of this technique, even though the gaps are often lost in audience noise. It's an effective and affecting rendering of one of the best-loved of Dylan compositions. It sounds the way you hear him in your dreams. Haunting.

Next up is this totally revised **If You See Her, Say Hello**. In contrast to the wry album recording, with its shrug of the shoulder, choke back the tears, don't let her know it hurts manner; this rewrite is compelling in its pain, convincing in its hatred - as much self-hatred as anything. Introduced on the harmonica, Dylan sings stunningly and powerfully from first to last: a real *tour de force*. A further harmonica break in the middle is followed by an outburst of anger and threats against any new or future lover she may take. The final lines:

*I know that she'll be back some day, of that there is no doubt,
And when that moment comes, Lord, give me the strength to keep (kick?) her out.*

Heylin reads this as Dylan doubting his strength, but though this may fit the new words, I believe the vituperation in Dylan's voice belies such doubts. To me he sings this as if the woman (Sara, presumably) would be swept away by the hurricane if she dared return at this precise moment. Oh Mercy? No mercy.

And then another change of mood. From the romantic introspection of **Johanna**, through the searing malice of **If You See Her, Say Hello**, we pass to the good-time barroom sound of the two Bobs on **Vincent Van Gogh**. In just three songs Dylan passes through an unbelievable range of emotions and it shows! This is Dylan at his magnificent, mercurial, brooding best. If the tour had continued as it started it couldn't possibly have failed. If anyone doubts that the Never-Ending Tour, for all its undoubted merits at various points along the way, actually represents a decline from Dylan's very highest standards; let him or her produce three consecutive songs from that tour where Dylan not only passes through such a range of emotions but, in the process convinces us that he does. If Lakeland fails to maintain this stunning momentum throughout, it is still a fine opening, and not a tape I would want to be without.

CLEARWATER (22/4/76)

As this is a TV studio recording, this can't really be considered a part of the tour. The sound quality is excellent, the film less so, and it seems that this is why Dylan rejected it for official release. My audio tape is the same as the video in terms of the song list, so I am missing the **One More Cup Of Coffee** performed flamenco-style which Clinton Heylin eulogises. It's at times like these that I understand why collectors keep on keepin' on. There's always that one more tape you don't have: the one that someone else says "you've really gotta have this one". But though I understand it, I've kicked the habit before it really got a hold of me. I genuinely believe that collecting is not what Dylan appreciation should be about. It's a side issue. It distracts you from the real spirit of his art: the heart of the matter. It's conceivable, though improbable, that somewhere in the world there is a person who has only one Dylan album, say **Blood On The Tracks**, and that he or she may never have read any book or magazine about the man, - and yet that person may, through intelligent, empathetic and intuitive listening, be nearer to an understanding of the truth of Dylan's art than your most successful hypnotist collector. Think about it.

MOBILE (29/4/76)

The next tape in my collection is *Mobile*. There are some particularly interesting performances from this show. We get the third and final **It's Alright Ma** of the tour. It's an arresting and clearly enunciated acoustic presentation. Throughout the 1976 tour Dylan's lyrics are unusually distinct; a pleasing continuance of the 1975 vocalisation. This is another respect in which these tours differ from the 1988-92 period. However, a similarity between then and now seems to be the care with which Dylan approaches his acoustic sets. For this reason I would again criticise the **Hard Rain** album selections for their unrepresentative nature, for their failure to present this tour in all its raging glory. How can you possibly justify no acoustic performances and no duets with Baez? It simply doesn't portray a balanced view of what was going down at the time.

Anyway, I've been side-tracked again. As I was saying, **It's Alright Ma** comes across wonderfully on this tape. I'm no music student, so I don't know the way to describe what he does. The best I can say is that the first two lines of each stanza are attacked very powerfully (as on **Bringing It All Back Home** and on most live versions) but the third and fourth lines are sung more softly, on a lower and gentler note, a falling cadence which is really incredibly effective. This pattern is followed throughout the song and I think beauty and depth are added as a result. The change in style avoids any listlessness on the part of the familiar listener.

A disappointment on this tape, however, is a very hurried vocal approach to **ISIS** which leaves us a thousand miles behind the now-definitive Montreal '75 performance.¹ Appropriately, **Stuck Inside Of Mobile** is rather special, with a gentler, countryish mood which differs from the album of the tour. Dylan sings this with a mellowness which then extends into **You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome** giving us a delightful, warm and tender couple of songs. The public image of the tour is all v's: vituperative, vindictive, virulent, vengeful, venomous and visionary - but these songs are the very opposite: homely, gentle and mellow. How typical of the man to defy the categorisation that the critics need and love.

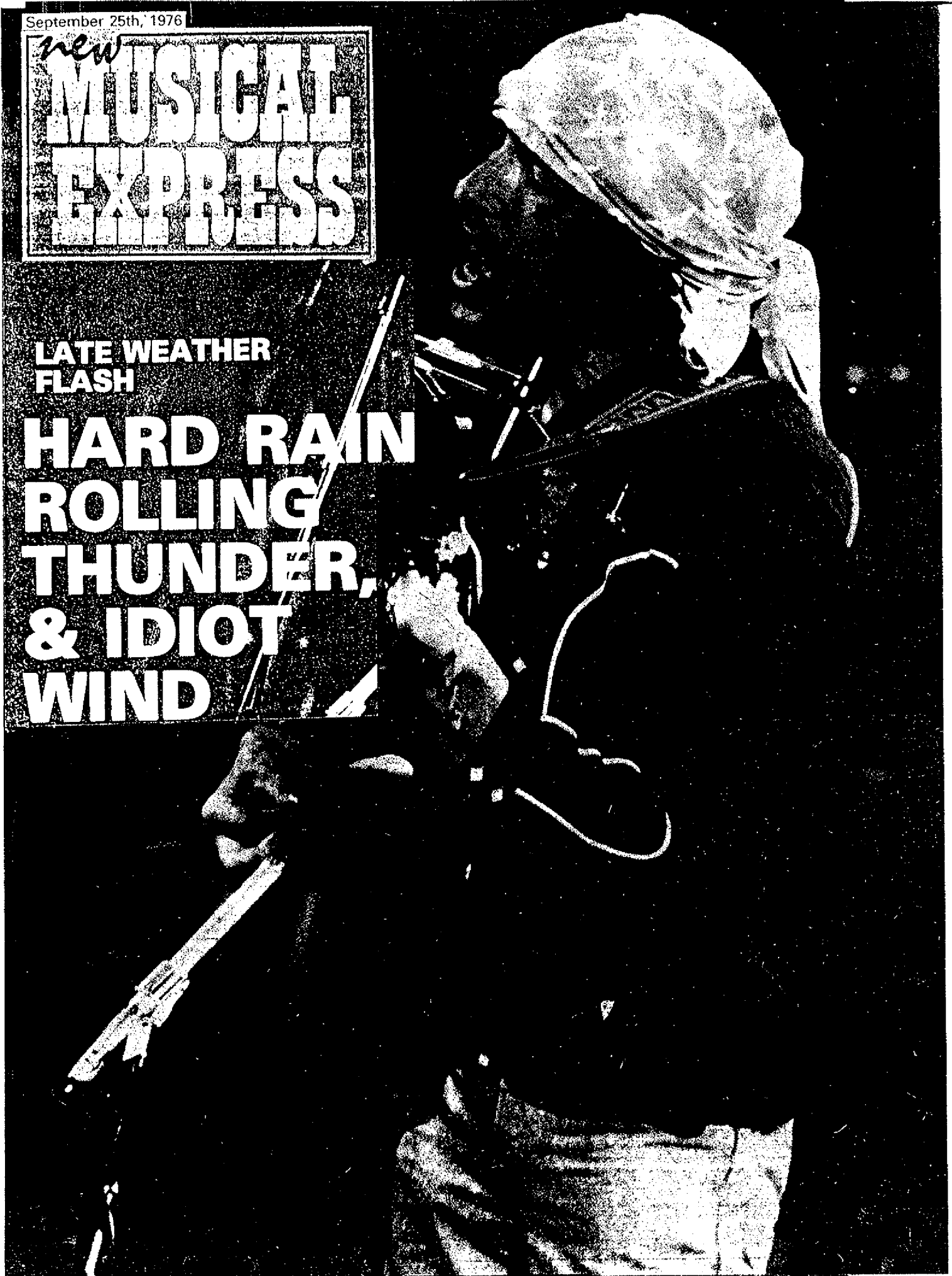
¹(There ought to be a fanzine article in this somewhere, don't you think? Is it possible for there to be a definitive Dylan interpretation/performance of any song?).

September 25th, 1976

new
**MUSICAL
EXPRESS**

**LATE WEATHER
FLASH**

**HARD RAIN
ROLLING
THUNDER,
& IDIOT
WIND**



As I was listening to this tape recently, I was struck for the first time by something about these lines from **Lay Lady Lay**:-

*Forget this dance, let's go upstairs.
Let's take a chance, who really cares?*

What struck me was how callous, cynical and cold these lines are. Not typical of Dylan, I don't feel, even though he can strike to wound in his art as we know. But this *who really cares?* is utterly barren. What an awful thing to be saying to someone you are about to make love with! There is no warmth, not even the pretence of liking or loving. She's not even worth faking it for. "I don't give a damn about anything, including you, but let's do it anyway." Amazing that the man can be like this, and portray it as real (no, more than that, he lives it surely?) within minutes of two of the warmest, most delightful performances ever (**Stuck Inside Mobile, You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome**). What chameleon hides inside that skin?

And, of course, it is a further example of the artistry displayed over the first three songs at Lakeland. Yes, I do like the Never-Ending Tour, honestly; but there really is no comparison with 1976 in terms of felt emotional range. The more I get into this essay, the more I feel like claiming that 1976 is the best tour ever. I don't really think that. For me, 1975 and 1966 are jointly outstanding. Looking back over the 16 years since 1976, however, I really can't see a higher peak. His voice was certainly wonderful in 1979/80, but the emotional stress, though deep, lacked this amazing breadth and scope.

Whilst I'm in the mood for it, I must just mention **Idiot Wind**, though it could relate to any performance of this song at any time. It's just so cathartic. A purging of self. I love it - always, every time I hear it. I have a tape with three versions in succession (**Blood On The Tracks, The Bootleg Series, Hard Rain**) which I play when I'm angry, frustrated, or just plain depressed. Or when I'm lonely - and although I'm happily married, I don't think that stops you from being lonely sometimes. There are times (don't you agree?) when no matter how close you are to another human being, it just isn't enough. You want more, and it's not possible, not in this world anyway. At those times I play **Idiot Wind** to help me kiss goodbye the howling beast on the borderline which separates everyone from me. Do you know what I mean? You must, surely?

And finally, before heading down yonder to New Orleans, there are two performances on this tape which may be a reference to his feelings at the time about Sara. Now, I'm not into biography as I've said before, but when you've read all the stuff about what was happening at the time, you can't help but look for its reflection on-stage. I do agree with James Muir (**Homer 6**) that "a work of art stands on its own, i.e. biographical....material is not required". But listening to a very loose and untogether rendering of **I Threw It All Away** and a "hounded by your memory" version of **Going Going Gone** it's very easy to see these as a reflection on the state of his marriage. **Going Going Gone** is a long-time favourite of mine, and I love the guitar playing on the **Planet Waves** original, and I'm fascinated by the rewrite for this tour.

*I've been here too long
And I've heard what you said,
But I've just got to go
Or I Can't sleep in my bed.*

- gives a whole new slant to the song and makes it one with the atmosphere of the tour. Despite this, the words vary from show to show. I think there is less consistency in the readings of this song than on any other on the tour. It does feel as if many of the song selections and adaptations deliberately mirror the reality of Dylan's life at this point.

NEW ORLEANS (3/5/76)

A real nugget from this show is the only outing of the tour for **Love Minus Zero**. An acoustic accompaniment to a husky-voiced performance. I'm sure if I was female I would consider this Dylan's sexiest voice! I don't know if he had trouble with his throat at this point or whether it was deliberate, but it results in one of his most sympathetic harmonising of voice with lyrics ever: a true masterpiece of the performer's art. Listen and tell me I'm wrong. If you can.

The other one-off from this show is a raucous, good-time, earthy **Rita Mae**. Coming immediately after a delicate, sensitive **You're A Big Girl Now** it provides yet another example of Dylan's effortless ability to transform both mood and tempo at will. Incidentally, every time I heard Sparks sing "I love you for your mind not your body etc." I was sure they had cribbed the idea from this song. But then, I would wouldn't I? My apologies for introducing such dross as Sparks into a Dylan essay. As a penance I'll listen to a Hammersmith '91 tape - sorry Mike, only joking! I ought to say, also, that **Isis** receives a powerful treatment this time; a vast improvement on that of four days earlier. The song is now delivered with

all the sincerity, gravity and passion it demands. If you didn't know Dylan, you'd wonder how the same artist with the same arrangement and the same band could elicit such a superior performance in such a short space of time.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

I was going to continue this essay and talk about San Antonio, Oklahoma City and Fort Worth, but I've just reached a place where I've realised, as with collectors, that more doesn't mean better. For me to continue to wax lyrical about the many stunning interpretations of different songs from this tour isn't really going to add anything to what has gone before. What I can point out, however, is just how much else there is. Like the duets with Baez, for instance. There is some staggering interaction between the two of them on the films of **Clearwater** and **Hard Rain**. I'm not sure that I understand what it was about. It seems to contain a potent mixture of respect, rivalry, one-upmanship and tenderness. Who knows what was going on? My guess is that it was somehow intertwined with the various infidelities reported from the period and the concurrent marriage break-up. As for the songs they performed, I'm particularly fond of **Railroad Boy**. Given his predilection for train lyrics, this traditional and melancholy folk song seems totally apposite. I love the hanging scene and the closing lines:

*And on my grave put a snow-white dove
To show the world that I died of love.*

Just one of the many sentimental, almost maudlin, folk songs that Dylan has rendered new for us over the years. Songs like **Barbara Allen**, **Lakes of Pontchartrain**, **Mary of the Wild Moor**, **Young But Dally Growin'** - mawkish but marvellous.

Deportees is another gem duetted with Baez, and **I Pity The Poor Immigrant**, which is given a very chirpy, upbeat, stop-start treatment. In fact, this incongruous reading of the song is in total contrast to the mood evoked by the lyrics. It's not the first time Dylan has presented (both live and in the studio) us with a musical arrangement which belies utterly the spirit of the song's lyrics. Maybe this is another case where "how does it feel?" has all sorts of puzzling connotations. Another area ripe for exploration by some Dylanologist?

What else have I missed? A live **Dink's Song** which, sadly, I've never heard. The playing of **Scarlet Rivera** which I always adored. The **Hard Rain** film on which "Bob looked very tense" (Shelton) with his "viper eyes" (Baez). I do think his pointy teeth look pretty snake-like also on this film. "Powerful readings" (Heylin) of **Idiot Wind** and **Shelter From The Storm** - weren't they just? And the awful clothes and hairstyles of Guam - did we really look that way? And, yet again, **Idiot Wind** in all its raging glory. Those wonderful elongated vowels and intonations: "and when she die-e-e-e-d it came to me" "bloo-o-o-o-d on your saddle" "slo-o-o-o-owly into autumn". Not forgetting a delicately phrased "I can't feel you anymore" which almost convinces you he might actually be missing Sara. Finally, a smoky-voiced **Knocking On Heaven's Door** reminding us (as if we needed it) of that uncanny ability to shift mood as the song or the situation demands. He doesn't look bored to me, he looks like a performer working out his life in his art, perhaps like no-one else can.

IMMORTALITY IS POSSIBLE

Paul Williams says of the **Hard Rain** album that it was "all about sex and timelessness and living in the moment". Well, yes of course it was. But the album missed so much besides. The tour was also about myth and magic, pain and desire. About the impossibility of re-capturing the essence of New England in the autumn, but in the process creating something unique and extraordinary. **Idiot Wind** was the anthem which always played in the background; the howling beast in Dylan which kept him always on the borderline of something - exactly what I don't know. Listening to the tapes is a kaleidoscopic experience. There are just so many conflicting and tumultuous emotions being exposed here. Raw nerves and open wounds. A man taken over by his daemons. His spirit, naked and intense, leading him to a point where acting is impossible, and painful truth is all he can offer. Dylan on the edge, ardent and burning with a consuming fire, the like of which we shall never see again.

I came across two new - (new to me anyway) - songs recently, **Black Muddy River** and **Little Moses**. What a hauntingly beautiful song is **Black Muddy River**, but the song that really caught at my heartstrings was **Little Moses**. The lyrics so simple and charmingly child-like, but expressing so appropriately the ancient story ingrained on our memories from our long forgotten Scripture lessons at school. *Moses in the Bulrushes* - I recall drawing a picture of the baby lying in the ark in my exercise book. When the words of this song fell from the lips of Bob Dylan I was transfixed.

June 30th 1992 - Early One Mornin'....

We left London on the "Wanted Man" coach on its journey to see our hero in Dunkirk, Reims and Belfort. Comrades from the North and South had renewed old acquaintances and the atmosphere was filled with anticipation of what lay ahead. Little Moses had almost become a permanent fixture during Bob's acoustic set in Australia. "Would I hear it in France?" I was determined that I should.

I found a position at the front of the stage at the Kursaal, Dunkirk. During the show I shouted for Bob to sing the song I was longing to hear. It was not to be. However in this alone was I disappointed, because all the other songs, magnificently performed, made up for this omission, and it was good to see Bob looking so fit and well again after London 1991. "Oh well, Tomorrow is not such a long time....".

July 1st 1992 - Paid some Dues Gettin' Thru'....

Our travel itinerary informed us that we would leave Dunkirk at 11.00am for a leisurely drive to Reims, arriving there at 4.00pm. It takes a lot to laugh, but it takes French lorry drivers and farmers to test your powers of endurance. However, battling slowly through the truckers' blockades and the farmers' barricades we eventually arrived at the Parc des Expositions, having about half an hour to spare before Bob took the stage.

Only managing to squeeze through to the third row, I knew my vocal chords would not be effective in reaching Bob's ears that night, so I just hoped telepathy would suffice. Needless to say, for the second night **Little Moses** eluded me, but yet again another great show, finishing with a salute from the Commandeur.

July 2nd 1992 - Headin' for another joint....

How can I describe the beauty and tranquility of Belfort? Try to imagine a clear blue sky, a placid lake surrounded by mountains, with the warm sun reflected in its depths. This was the setting for our final show, and my last opportunity to hear **Little Moses**.

We spent a relaxing afternoon in this atmosphere and I was feeling confident that this show was going to be the high point of my trip. Again at the front of the stage when Bob appeared, I knew that when his two song acoustic set arrived it would be my last chance to hear what I was longing to hear. I waited for a lull in the cheers and shouted, "**Do Little Moses Bob, please.**" He promptly went straight into **It Ain't Me Babe** - or was that "It Ain't your Night Babe"? I knew then that the next song was my last hope. He finished **Babe**, stepping backwards from the mike. Then as he began to move forward I again shouted, "**Bob, Do Little Moses.**" My heart fell as he seemed to strum the chords for **It's All Over Now, Baby Blue**. But suddenly there was a change in the chord sequence and then came the words... "*Away by the waters so clear...*" and my heart soared.

Had HE responded to MY plea? Had MY words fallen upon HIS ears? "Am I still dreaming yet?" A brilliant performance of **Little Moses** and for me the highlight of the tour. For this alone the traumas of the highways had been worthwhile. July 3rd 1992 - So Now I'm Goin' Back Again....

And why shouldn't it be your shout that occasioned this great performance, Janice? I'll say one thing, if indeed it was, then we all owe you a tremendous vote of thanks. It was a quite breathtaking performance and he/she whose heart doesn't melt and break simultaneously at the intimate close doesn't possess a heart worth having. (At an open air festival, ye gods!)

Janice says 'thanks' to John Roberts and John Way for info on the song and I've reproduced a page from the 1959-64 **SING OUT Anthology** overleaf.

Little Moses

Here is a typical song from the vast repertoire of the Carter Family whose imprint on contemporary folk-singing style has influenced an entire generation of folk artists. The Carter Family, whose recordings today are priceless collector's items, comes from the Smokey Mountains in western Virginia where the old English ballad tradition has meshed with the Negro folk idiom and produced the best of today's so-called "hill-billy" music. Their rendition of this song can be heard in Vol. 2 of Folkways' massive Anthology of American Folk Music (FP 252).

A - way by the riv-er so clear____, the
la - dies were wind-ing their way____. And
Phar - oh's young daugh-ter stepp'd down in the
wa-ter to bathe in the cool of the day____. Be-
fore it was dark she op-ened the ark and
found the sweet in - fant was there____. Be-

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2 Away by the waters so blue,
The infant was lonely and sad,
She took him in pity and thought
him so pretty,
And made Little Moses so glad.
She called him her own, her beauti-
ful son,
And sent for a nurse that was near.</p> | <p>3 Away by the river so clear,
They carried the beautiful child,
To his tender mother, his sister and
brother
And Moses looked happy and smiled.
His mother so good did all that she
could
To rear him and teach him with care.</p> |
| <p>4 Away by the sea that was red,
Little Moses the servant of God,
While in him confided, the sea was
divided
As upward he lifted his rod.
The Jews safely crossed while King
Pharaoh's host
Was drowned in the waters and lost.</p> | <p>5 Away on a mountain so high,
And the last one that ever might see.
While in him victorious, his hope was
most glorious,
He'd soon over Jordan be free.
When his labor did cease, he left there
in peace,
And rested in Heaven above.</p> |

Gonna Have To Go To College

Two entries on the educational front - but, unfortunately, after Pia and I had finished our educations in Finland and Scotland. From Finnish school text books - supplied by both Maria W. and *The Wicked Messenger* - there is an excellent cassette and text based lesson and exercise on **The Times They Are - A Changin'**. (I find it intriguing that they can explore the nuances of non-standard English in foreign schools - you can't imagine it ever happening here.)

Jim the Scorner provides Scotland's entry from last years "Higher English" paper. Scottish readers may well remember sitting their compositional papers and being prompted to write on a subject while being guided into suitable (or otherwise) responses by totally inappropriate quotes from some old duffer of a poet or another (We, of course used to wonder why they didn't quote Dylan instead). Yep, it still happens, this year's included lines from our Bob's **Shelter From The Storm** to prompt essays on caring for the elderly or some such stuff - bet all "the kids" wondered why they didn't quote Morrissey or Shaun Ryder.

Loose Windscreens

Patrick Humphries had an interesting exchange with Jon Landau on 17/6/92 - well, this bit was interesting:

PH The box idea seems particularly appropriate when you consider Bruce's comment to Robert Hilburn in the *LA Times* about how Bob Dylan's **Series Of Dreams** from *The Bootleg Series* box set *triggered something* in him.

JL That was an interesting moment, when he experienced that. It's amazing what an influence Dylan remains. We both went to see him in Los Angeles just before we left, and he was just great. That song really did have some impact on Bruce.

The above was quoted in *For True Rockers Only Issue 11* - details from **Badlands**; 11, St George's Place, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 3LA UK - which also includes a comparison of Brooce n' Bob on tour by one Clinton Heylin.

Dead drummer:

Thomas Storch's interview with Bill Kreutzman on 21/5/92 contained the following exchange:

TS How about the shows you did with Dylan?

BK Yeah, that was kind of fun...it was loose...I always liked Dylan - I was the guy in high school that loved Dylan and all my friends hated him, you know, couldn't understand why I listened to him. I like his music, so it was fun to finally get to play on the same stage with him, he's a poet, he's not a musician, he doesn't know his on songs very well, but it was a fun thing to play with him...it's nice to be on stage with someone you admire a lot. I overlooked the looseness - he wrote the words...how hard it must be for him to be Bob Dylan, after thirty years, when you think it's hard in the Grateful Dead, how hard is it for him?

That was from *Relix*, a (mainly) Deadhead fanzine- more of/from them in the next subscriber's special

Looking Back?

Rumours of a Dylan autobiography to be placed in front of an adoring and astounded public reminded me of a reference to this in *Rolling Stone* nearly 21 years ago. It went like this:

Dylan is in the midst of two large, time-consuming projects. One is his autobiography, which he's worked on intermittently over the last year. *I never thought of the past*, he said, *now I sometimes do. I think back sometimes to all those people I once did know. It's an incredible story; putting together the pieces. It's like a puzzle, as far as stories go. I meditate on it sometimes, all that craziness.....I really like to work on it.* (*Rolling Stone* 6-Jan-1972)

From a Don Was interview in THE INDEPENDENT 11-6-92

When we produced **Under The Red Sky**, as we were mixing one day he went out to the music store across the street just to kill some time, and he came back with this box, and everyone sort of knew it was Bob's box and we kept away from it, and when the second mix was done he opened the box and pulled out an accordion. I don't believe he'd ever played the accordion before, but he got us to set up a mike and he did one pass on the accordion played right through. And as we were listening to it out of context, we were all thinking, 'Oh man, there goes the song, this is the goofiest thing I ever heard, he's just blowin' accordion through the whole thing.' But when we put it down in the proper place in the mix this thing sat so nicely, that was the point I realized how great his instincts are. You can hear it on **Under The Red Sky** and, I think, **Born In Time**.

He's not completely mad, he's very intelligent. He just played a week in Los Angeles and everybody, every musician in town came down and people enjoyed the show, even though he's making weird faces and acting like a madman, that's part of it. But in the course of two sentences I could completely change my opinion, 'cos I really don't know, nobody knows.

Makes You Wanna Stop and Read A Book

8: *No Direction Home*: Norman Spinrad: Fontana/Collins 1977.

Norman Spinrad's short story first appeared in *New Worlds 2*; edited by the mighty Michael Moorcock in 1971. This makes it quite possible that the first time I ever saw the chorus to *Like A Rolling Stone* was reading it quoted at the beginning of this story. An anthology of Spinrad's short stories by the above publishers in 1977 used this story as the lead, and used its title for the whole collection.

Words pouring off of every page - well once you look them up, that is

***The Bob Dylan Concordance*: Steve Michel: Rolling Tomes Inc.: 1992**

"At last a Bob Dylan concordance", you might well cry out - and you would be right. The only problem is that the task is only half-completed; just as the book has a glorious colour front cover but a black and white reproduction of another great colour shot on the back, so one has to have very mixed emotions when contemplating this, our first, Bob Dylan concordance.

Steve Michel must feel he's completed an Everest climb of a task - but the truth is, that, laudable though his efforts have been so far, he is only at the foothills. Presumably in an effort to keep costs down, you get a song reference chart which allows you to look up words in song-books rather than have all occurrences of a word listed and referenced as is normal practice with concordances. This certainly increases the book's usefulness as a replacement to *Trivial Pursuits* but slows down the work of the scholar immensely. It is presumably the latter use that is the intended purpose of the book and Mr Michel is selling himself short. I know that the resultant book, as I envisage it, would be both weighty and expensive, but, hell, that has always been true of reference works.

The other major problem - which, for me, must be sorted out by the next edition to make the concordance workable - is that Mr Michel has taken *Lyrics* and the official song-books as his text. As we all know, the lyrics in *Lyrics* often differ wildly from what Dylan originally recorded - nearly always to the detriment of the piece - so we have a concordance that does not even have the original words the artist used! (The problem of alternate versions is thornier; though, I, for one, would have both *Caribbean Winds* and a host of *Idiot Winds*).

Now, as in the first problem noted above, Mr Michel has obviously agonized over this and his introduction explains his decision to stick with the *Lyrics* as his folio - again, though, I feel he has sold his enterprise short. If we can have Shakespeare concordances that refer to differing folios, so we could have Dylan from a variety of sources. Alternatively, if we must stick to one source, at least let us all agree that the official recordings constitute Dylan's canon and not the, often enfeebled, rewrites in *Lyrics*.

There are a couple of other, minor, points I have to disagree with but I don't want to sound all negative. Despite my reservations, I think this is one of the most essential publications you can buy on Dylan if you are interested in studying his work in depth; it has the potential to save you many hours of tracking down half-remembered connections and, perhaps, springing new correlations into your imagination.

So, to conclude, an essential purchase but one with much room for re-working; a task just begun, far from concluded. Financial viability must be a worry, perhaps Mr Michel should instigate an "upgrade" policy similar to the computer software companies he seems so enamoured of, with revised releases planned for years ahead - or perhaps some educational institution could help.

Hibbing's A Good Ol' Town

Why then (irony aside), one wonders, does Dylan continue: *I ran away from it when I was 10, 12, 13, 15...etc..?* I suspect Pia may have found the answer while reading the *Hibbing Daily Tribune* and remarking on the preponderance of Finnish surnames. She came across an "advice column" that was pure *Viz*; as its title: *Vanilla cures smelly microwave* suggested. Our favourite tip - out of many gems - was a "Fast Fact" use for ice-cube trays: *Use as a child's earring organizer*.

Marlon Brando

I started reading a trashy piece on Marlon Brando - you know the kind of thing, journalist decides there is one "slant" to take and never deviates - because the opening description of an eccentric, privacy-hungry loner who was nonetheless an entertainer with fans around the world, struck the odd chord or two. (And also because, in its own way, *What've you got?* is nearly as good a question as *How does it feel?* There were other connections too - how about this, for example:

He loathed his midwest, middle American, white-bread, middle-class background so when he left thankfully to study acting in New York he created another, more fitting for an exotic nonconformist.....note the following 'biography'..... Marlon Brando: born in Bangkok, Siam, the son of an etymologist now affiliated with the Field Museum in Chicago. Mr. Brando passed his early years in Calcutta, Indochina, the Mongolian desert and Ceylon. His formal education began in Switzerland and ended in Minnesota where he found the rigid restriction of military school too confining.....

Dear me, that's an even better story than some of our Bob's! Maybe this guy's a bigger influence than even James Dean?

Makes You Wanna Stop and Read A Book**9: *Small World*: David Lodge: Penguin, 1984.**

The almost unbelievably tedious plot and prose of David Lodge's book - are they all like this? - is illuminated briefly by the mention of an escape to a cottage haven, taking only a few books, Guinness and Bob Dylan tapes. (pp. 208) "Shortlisted for The Booker Prize" it says on the cover - I'm not surprised as it is as establishmentarian as an England football manager and as dull as his tactics.

Makes You Wanna Stop and Read A Book**10: Pat Cadigan: *Dispatches From The Revolution*: Asimov's SF Magazine**

The story appeared in the July 1991 issue and I've just gotta quote you the opening line/paragraph:

Dylan was coming to Chicago.

Great, huh? Booker prize and more for this little lovely. I won't spoil the story for you, but Dylan is mentioned throughout and the likely happening - or not - of his upcoming concert is one of the underpinning motifs (and plot elements). How about this some six pages into the story:

The source of the DYLAN IS COMING! rumour was never pin-pointed. Some say it sprang into being all on its own and stayed alive because so many people wanted it to be true. And for all anyone knows, perhaps it actually was true, for a little while anyway; perhaps Dylan simply changed his mind.

Wanted Man

Bob Forryan, who was the only reader other than Jim Heppel to respond to my plea for pet-hate-audience-shouts,¹ listed some excellent examples of audience shouts he'd prefer never to have heard. One, though, is puzzling. Bob mentions that one particular person seems to shout - repeatedly, I believe - *They Don't Deserve It* - throughout Dylan's Hammersmith '91 tape(s): "On and the b***** goes..." complains Bob "and to add insult to injury, they've even named a cd after it". Mr Forryan then asks if the fellow was me by any chance! No, it wasn't, Bob - nor can I tell you who it was but, since you asked me in a previous letter to introduce you to Lambchop during the Leicester bash, you can always ask him - he's bound to know.

HOT PRESS - CELEBRATING 15 YEARS - THE ROCK 'N' ROLL ISSUE

Ah, birthdays, anniversaries etc. - they just seem to go on and on; for a genre so young it seems a trifle strange. Nonetheless it keeps Bob's name in high profile, needless to say he appears in snatches throughout **Hot Press's** celebratory pages. Here's all but the briefest mentions and the none-too-taxing quiz questions. (Excepting the review of **Outlaw Blues** which will appear in the next subscribers' special "Covers and Collaborations".)

FIRST VINYL PURCHASES:

Dick Spring (Leader, Labour): I was a big Dylan fan, and the very first record that really had an impact on me was probably **Blowin' In The Wind**. I guess we're still chasing the moon now too.

Eamon Dunphy (Journalist/Broadcaster): I'll have to be honest and say I don't really remember...I suppose I should pretend it was an early Elvis record, or an early Dylan or something, but I simply didn't buy records when I was young.

Tangled Up In Blues - The Rory Gallagher Story:

Rory is equally understated about another close encounter with yet another rock legend, which happened after a gig in The Shrine Auditorium in L.A. in late 1978. Gallagher had played a stormer of a show and the capacity crowd had loved every number of it. Unfortunately, jet lag and the general rigours of touring were catching up with him and he was too exhausted for any post-show meeting and greeting. Conscious of this, Donal positioned himself outside Rory's dressing room and proceeded to turn all visitors away.

Most of the well-wishers understood the situation and left without any hassle but there was one strange-looking guy with straggly hair and a scarf around his face who wanted to talk to Rory and just wouldn't take no for an answer. When he became too insistent, Donal started to get more forceful and told him in no uncertain terms that Rory wanted to be left alone.

Eventually, this over-zealous fan relented and turned to leave but not before telling Donal that he was a musician himself and that he was impressed by Donal's resolve and dedication to "looking after the man". It was several minutes later that someone pointed out to Donal that the person he had just chased away was actually Bob Dylan.

1

Doesn't it make you ashamed that these two always respond with letters and answers? "No,". Oh well, just a thought.

This threw poor old Donal into a panic, 'cause he knew I was a huge Dylan fan, laughs Rory. So he ran out after him and looked everywhere for this fella with the scarf. Eventually, he found him and put out his hand to shake Dylan's hand. Then he literally grabbed him and dragged him back to the dressing room. Dylan was very nice. He said he liked the show and all the rest and we talked a bit about the blues and that. I'm not usually star-struck by any of these people but it was really great to meet Dylan. He's one of my all-time heroes.

Blow Up...The Silver Screen:

Don't Look Back: Still the most fascinating rockumentary ever made, this was shot in black and white on a single hand-held camera. Following Dylan on his ground-breaking 1965 British tour, Pennebaker seems to have had a genuine all access pass. He captures Dylan sparring with the press, his unease with his image, his cynical, withdrawn and sometimes sarcastic attitude to all his hangers-on and rivals (his one glance put down of Donovan is unforgettable). And pushing even further behind the scenes, we see Dylan's manager and agent at work, bluffing the BBC into doubling the price for an appearance. Makes even *In Bed With Madonna* look like a cover up.

Blind Eye Turned To: Renaldo & Clara, Dylan's interminable avant-garde love story-cum-concert; Dylan co-starring with Rupert Everett in *Hearts Of Fire*; D.A. Pennebaker's recent documentary of Depeche Mode who he described as having a similar quality to Dylan in the 60s.

Rock 'N' Roll Symphony:

The Country Crossing: It was Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* which legitimised country music for many post *Sgt. Pepper* rock fans, and spawned that hybrid known as country-rock. Musically and lyrically, the album's stripped-down language was the antithesis of the stoned excesses of the psychedelic age, including Dylan's own previous LSD-induced prolixity. And another significant switch: on *John Wesley Harding* Dylan's long-time existential angst was replaced by a newly articulated faith in God.

This implied renouncement of the devil's music and his abandoning of the pointed political commentary of songs like *The Death Of Emmett Till* in favour of a less problematic mysticism, made Dylan so welcome in Music City USA that in 1969 he returned to record *Nashville Skyline* an album which further sentimentalised the family, legitimised sex and home and, in essence, betrayed many of the original tenets of rock 'n' roll. Not surprisingly, it also further endeared Dylan and rock to country fans, leading directly to the breed of country-rockers that dominate Nashville today.

The Singer-Songwriters: Dylan, as ever, led the way with his retreat into mysticism on *John Wesley Harding* and his celebration of home, family and maybe even the American flag on *Nashville Skyline*....

Bob Roberts

The latest Tim Robbins' film *Bob Roberts* promises to be fruitful ground for the Dylan reference watcher. The "in" joke of the film is that it constantly refers to our man's career in general and *Don't Look Back* in particular. (*The Times They Are Changin' Back* is one song, Pia caught a parody of the opening film sequence on a review programme) It is about a right-wing folksinger running for president of the good ol' US of A. (What I want to know is: *Does he have a change of heart some 18 years later and become a humanist, preaching peace and tolerance (especially to our gay brethren) in redneck areas* ??)

Ron Wood interviewed in Rock World: Sep 92 issue 4/Vol 1

I did Live Aid with Bob Dylan but that was a very big, public, affair. We were heavily criticised for being an embarrassment on Live Aid but I don't think we were. The rehearsals were unbelievable. Bob Dylan was doing great stuff, and then of course, just before we went on stage, he changed it all! And then he bust a string, and I gave him my guitar, and as I didn't have a roadie with me, he got this wonky out of tune guitar. We just had to bluff and get by on one string. We had no chance to tune up.

"I was talking to Dave Stewart last night and he said *Bob Dylan told me you'd got a really hot album coming out*. I thought, 'How the hell does he know?' But apparently the Stones security man Jim Callaghan, who goes everywhere with Bob, came to my sessions in Ireland, and he was very excited, so he must have told Bob. I get on well with Bob myself, although a lot of people don't understand him. I must admit neither do I, but he's Gemini like me. I was trying to explain to explain Bob to Siobhan Fahey, Dave Stewart's wife last night because she doesn't understand him at all. She quite objected to Dave working with him. I tried to explain that he was still a great poet even though his songs don't sound like the way he used to sing them. He's gone very abstract with his music, like when he draws. I've got one of his drawings in my studio which he did when we played the Hammersmith Odeon. He did a view of himself laying on a couch in a dressing room, but drawn from above."

Maybe Siobhan's objections stemmed from Bob and Dave's propensity to imbibe heavily together on social occasions...continue *Rock World* - whatever can they mean?)

Commentary On The Cuttings

After letters of encouragement, I have decided to go ahead with printing some of the Australian press coverage. Apparently you don't mind duplication with other 'zines and welcome having as many reprints as is reasonable inside the one set of covers. So be it. What is, and isn't, 'reasonable' is somewhat trickier; I've included Mr. Coupe's and Mr. Wilmoth's interviews in two of their many guises. I wanted to give you a hint of their variety without over-burdening this issue with them, Mr. Coupe's, in particular, seemed to turn up all over the place.

However, we open with two encouraging reviews for Clinton Heylin as *Behind The Shades* comes out in paperback in Australia. On page 8 there is a very interesting piece by Mark Mordue with a lovely photo bottom left. (Oh, ok - that actually came from an Italian paper reviewing a summer show, but, hey we thought it fitted nicely.) Then a few pages of Australian coverage, showing a wide variety of response to the shows.

Then it is on to the USA, via a couple of exotic stops and an encounter with Michael Smith. Being sillier than even the average journalist when it comes to Dylan, this character expected Dylan in 1963 mode and was very disappointed to find: A) He played rock music and B) He had aged. (I wonder what he makes of the new album?) A poor, but interesting, review of Santa Rosa is followed by another piece by Peter Doggett (bless him) for the *Record Collector* (bless them), with the bonus of two important interviews. [I'm just worried that they'll run out of articles to run on Dylan.]

We nip back to Australia on page 29, as some other reports arrive. Then we have a hodge-podge from the glossy rock monthlies with *Q* making a fine return to numerous Dylan mentions. Note, too, the photograph of Jakob Dylan - cool, or what? (Incidentally, it *is* a fine debut LP.) The bottom headline on page 33 is a bit intimidating, I mean I was nowhere near the place! Over the page Mr Schwarz pleases me with his positive review and intrigues with his observation that "there was little trademark Dylan banter." (!)

Page 35 - CALL AN AMBULANCE FOR LAMBCHOP! Sorry about the gruesome headline - just be thankful I didn't reprint the front page of the damn thing! Actually, I debated long and hard about including this piece and - after taking advice from several, and opposing, corners, I decided to go ahead. After all, the aim of this section is to let you know what the press are saying/doing; my personal distaste for an article's tone or content should not preclude their inclusion. (If they seem important.) This one is important for several reasons: it is how Dylan was greeted on his 'homecoming' to the twin cities. The cover posed the same question in even bigger letters and had as unflattering a photograph of Dylan as they had in their archives. (I presume so, anyway!) Pretty horrible, eh? The articles aren't as offensive as the cover/title, but you have to wonder what effect they had on Bob. (Galvanised him to even better performances if the tape of the last night in Minneapolis is anything to go by!)

Page 36 includes one of the great photos from an Italian paper of Bob leaning out of his hotel room window in Genoa. On page 38 Dylan's arrival in Thunder Bay is heralded by an excellent piece and on the following page is a man some of you will recognize. (No, not the one in the frame!) This would probably have been my favourite page were it not for the succeeding one as *The Hibbing Daily Tribune* covers the return of the local boy made ~~good~~, er, good.

And on and on it goes, this fascinating side story of Dylan in the press. There are new books out and more around the corner, the Madison Square Gardens cuttings are beginning to arrive and the new album is only weeks away from official release. (It is a few days since I wrote my quick review and it hasn't been off the tape deck since, make of that what you will.) Alas, I must break off somewhere and the tribute show in New York will be a fine place to start in Issue Eight, although first reports are not too encouraging! (Still, it is difficult to imagine Mr. Dylan giving a poor performance in front of a TV audience reckoned to be in the hundreds of millions, isn't it?)

Bob Dylan At Madison Square Gardens; 16/10/92 - All this and much, much more in Issue Eight!



THE CUTTINGS

Page(s)	Date	Author(s)	Publication
7 (top)	22/3/92	David Costello	Sunday Mail (Brisbane)
7 (bottom)	18/3/92	N/K	On The Street (Sydney)
8	24/3/92	Mark Mordue	Drum Media (Sydney)
9	28-29/3/92	Imre Saluszinsky	The Weekend Australian
10-11	28/3/92	Christie Eliezer	JUKE (Australia)
12	14/3/92	Keith Belanger	JUKE (Australia)
13	1/4/92	Stuart Coupe	Impress (Melbourne)
(Clockwise from top)	26/3/92	N/K	Telegraph-Mirror (Sydney)
	28/3/92	N/K	JUKE #883 (Australia)
14	15-28/4/92	Flic Everett	Up Town Northwest (UK)
15 (top)	20/3/92	C. J. Anderson	The Australian
15 (bottom)	30/3/92	Noel Mengel	Courier-Mail (Brisbane)
16 (Left)	18/4/92	Doug Kesselring	JUKE #886 (Australia)
16 (Right)	3/4/92	Suzy Freeman-Greene	The Age (Melbourne)
17	20/3/92	Ron Banks	The West Australian (Perth)-LEFT AFTER 5TH SONG!
18-19	27/3/92	Stuart Coupe	Time Out #560 (Australia)
(box)	27/3/92	Russell Hunter	Time Out #560 (Australia)
20	??/4/92	Peter Wilmoth	N/K (Australia)
	??/4/92	Stuart Coupe	N/K (Australia)
21	16/4/92	Michael Smith	The Mercury (Hobart & Tasmania)
	??/4/92	Letters Page - in response	The Mercury (Hobart & Tasmania)
22	8/4/92	Chris Copas	Launceston Week
	12/4/92	Ricky Eaves	Sunday Examiner (Launceston)
	11/4/92	Ricky Eaves	Sunday Examiner (Launceston)
23	16-22/4/92	Jon Woodhouse	Maui News (Hawaii)
24	4/5/92	Philip Elwood	San Francisco Examiner
25-28	Sep 1992	Clarke/Doggett	Record Collector
	Sep 1992	Peter Doggett	Record Collector
	Sep 1992	Peter Doggett (?)	Record Collector
29	22/2/92	Michael Epis	Herald-Sun (Melbourne)
30	Aug 1992 (?)	N K	Rolling Stone
(Clockwise from top)	?	Adam Higginbotham	Select
	Oct 1992	N K	Q
	Oct 1992	Jimmy Nicol	Q
	Jul 1992	Letter	Q
	?	N K	Select
31	Oct 1992	Sue Eliot	Q
	Oct 1992	Mark Cooper	Q
	Aug 1992	N K	Q
	Sep 1992	Paul Davies	Q
	Sep 1992	N K	Q
32	13/2/92	N K	Herald-Sun (Melbourne)
	23/4/92	Andrew Darby	The Age (Melbourne)
33	20/8/92	Dr. Rock	Morning News (Erie, USA)
	21/8/92	Jeanine M. Gatesman	Bravo! (?) (USA)
34	5/4/92	Larry Schwarz	The Sunday Age (Melbourne)
	Aug 1992	Mark Rowland	Musician
	21/7/92	N K	New York Post
	23/8/92	Lynn Saxberg	Ottawa Citizen
35-37	26/8-1/9/92	Souder/Simons/Goetzman/Surowicz	Twin Cities Reader (Minneapolis & St. Paul)
38	26/8/92	Dalton Cormier	Thunder Bay Post
39	Aug 1992	Angela Crispino	Thunder Bay Life
40	1/9/92	Louise Lundin	Hibbing Daily Tribune
41-42	20/9/92	Richard Williams	The Independent On Sunday
43	Oct 92	N/K	Record Collector
	Oct 92	Official Press Release	Laistor Dickson Ltd.
44	26/9/92	(First 3 items = N/K =>)	N.M.E.
(Clockwise from topright)	3/9/92	David Hinkley	New York Daily Post
	3/9/92	David Hinkley	New York Daily Post
	25/9/92	Lisa Robinson	New York Daily Post
45	22/9/92	Mike Flanagan	The Express (Lockhaven, Pennsylvania.)
	4/10/92	Tony Parsons	The Sunday Telegraph
46	11/10/92	Mick Hamilton	The Lies Of The World

Reclusive rocker on the tour trail

IS BOB Dylan becoming the Howard Hughes of rock?

Biographer Clinton Heylin thinks so.

He says the singer-guru's behavior has become increasingly reclusive and bizarre.

Of course, Dylan has always been a singular figure and one who blurred the lines between fact and fiction.

He remains one of the century's great inventions — the middle-class Jewish kid who landed in New York in the early 60s full of tall stories.

The young Dylan would tell gullible interviewers about a youth spent on boxcars and circus caravans.

So we aren't dealing with Cliff Richard here — the man has always been a privacy freak, spinning webs of illusion to keep the world at bay.

But, according to Heylin, Dylan has now crossed the threshold and is heading into loony-tune land.

He says Dylan's desire for seclusion has become tinged with paranoia.

The great man has taken to wearing hoods and capes, both on stage and in the recording studio during the sessions for the second Travelling Wilburys album and *Under the Red Sky*, his latest album.

Guns'n'Roses guitarist Slash says that when Dylan was talking to him during the *Red Sky* sessions, "all I could see behind all those hoods and shades was his nose and upper lip".

Heylin also says that Dylan, when touring, travels on his own bus, stays at different hotels and rarely talks to his musicians.

Of course, Brisbane fans will have a chance to make up their own minds on Saturday when Dylan performs at the Entertainment Centre, Boondall.

The Nineties' Dylan, writes Heylin, is a perpetual troubador on a never-ending tour.

Although he retains contact with ex-wife Sara, his children and a few casual girlfriends, he is a lonely figure.

But don't be misled. *Behind the Shades* is no hatchet job on a jaded superstar.

It is a serious and balanced work, an important addition to the Dylan story by an expert in this field — Heylin produces a British magazine on the singer's life and work.

This portrait of Dylan is painstakingly drawn using hundreds of interviews with the subject and those in his inner-circle — from musical partners like Al Kooper and Robbie Robertson to sidekicks like Bobbie Neuwirth and lovers such as Suze Rotolo and Joan Baez.

Heylin's insights into the latest incarnation of prophet Bob and his exhaustive treatment of his 70s and 80s career, also set *Behind the Shades* apart from other Dylan books, which skim through his post-60s work.

Heylin concedes that Dylan is no longer the force he was.

But he argues that the story of an artist who scaled the heights of genius before he was 25 and has spent the rest of his life coming to terms with that should not be ignored.

He says Dylan's career since his late 70s religious conversion has produced its fair share of great songs.

It is also "the story of a very personal battle to construct a world-view

that retains his faith in God and humanity".

The account of Dylan's conversion to Christianity in 1978 makes fascinating reading.

He was sitting in a motel room in Arizona, divorced, alone and strung out from touring, when he had a "born-again experience".

"Jesus put his hand on me. I felt my whole body tremble ... the glory of the Lord knocked me down and picked me up."

Soon he was in Bible school, learning a fundamentalist creed that Heylin says was apocalyptic: "The end of the world was not merely nigh, it was nigh with a capital double-underlined N."

In Dylan's words: "I said the answer was Blowin' in the Wind and it was. Now I'm telling you Jesus is coming back and he is. And there is no other way of salvation."

This dark vision of a looming Armageddon still exerts a powerful influence on Dylan's art, right up to *Under the Red Sky*, where he reminds us "that the next flood will be not water, but fire".

For the fans who have followed him since the 60s, his life will continue to fascinate and intrigue, making *Behind the Shades* well worthwhile.

DYLAN, BEHIND THE SHADES, by Clinton Heylin, Penguin, 528 pages, pbk, \$19.95
Review: DAVID COSTELLO

Another major artist whose career has been subject to constant speculation is Bob Dylan.

Now available in paperback is Clinton Heylin's, *Behind The Shades - The Biography*, (Penguin Books, \$19.95) which is as good a biography of the Zim as you'll get.

Unlike other Dylan biographies, Heylin's gives extensive coverage to the three decades of Dylan's career. The last major biography written by Robert Shelton, virtually stopped dead after Dylan's motor bike accident.

As Heylin points out in his introduction "Now Bob Dylan is fifty. It's twenty-five years since he fell off his motorcycle in Woodstock. Yet the history of those twenty-five years remains untold, two thirds of of this book is devoted to Dylan's post-accident career. It is my intent to show the full sweep of his life to date, and his post accident years actually represent five sixths of his entire recording career".

Behind The Shades really is the authoritative Dylan tome and a mandatory read for anyone interested in the Zim. Hey there's stuff in here that even I didn't know and when it comes to Mr Zimmerman I'm more than just a little obsessive!

BOB DYLAN story by MARK MORDUE

Magic, Mirrors And The Yellow Leaf

"All is clouded by desire — as a fire by smoke, as a mirror by dust — it blinds the soul."

LATELY I've been troubled by passion, what a stuff-up it can be, how it tangles in love and lust like a drug, an addiction. Passion — you can drown in it.

IS it crossing thirty that is making me tired, or is it the lifesong of age and experience giving me a new respect for gentleness? Sometimes I wonder ... But I can understand the Buddhist idea of reaching grace by transcending desire, by just being, not hiding in yesterday or hoping for tomorrow or hungering for golden gods and goddesses to make you happy. Just being. Perfect, blissful desirelessness.

EVERYTHING comes down to you. Most of all your happiness.

MAYBE the title appeals to me, but Bob Dylan's *Desire* is back in my life again, with the country-sweet backing vocals of Emmylou Harris and Scarlet Rivera's lamenting, righteous violin. This was Dylan's mid-70s return album (Dylan is always returning), with *Hurricane*, his epic assertion of the protest form many thought he had abandoned in his early '60s heyday. *Hurricane* raged against the wrongful imprisonment of Rubin Carter, a black middleweight boxer and number one contender "who coulda been the champion of the world!" Dylan told of a man "loisely tried" and forced to sit "like Buddha in a ten foot cell". Justice in America was "a game" where everyone was devoured by the racism and moral corruption of those who put Carter behind bars. The song fairly burned.

DYLAN's friend, the great American Beat poet Alan Ginsberg, wrote some wild, chopping sleeve-notes for *Desire* under the title *Songs Of Redemption*. Possibly the poet who had seen "the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked", had better hopes for Dylan, and more than an intuition that he would head towards the Bible for solace and truth.

I was in my late teens when Bob Dylan was entering his religious phase, and like many people I was more fashioned than enquiring. Critically out-of-favour, the poet of another generation that punk music was desecrating, Dylan was a ghost of former meanings, a no longer central act in the cultural firmament. His Christianity was put to me as the desperate grasping of a middle-aged man, and I accepted the media sacraments faithfully and took up with a new set of heroes: Lydon, Strummer, Smith, Devoto, Cove ...

TEN years later I saw a video for *Jokerman* with Dylan dressed in a beautiful white suit, and an array of still-images (Biblical, Bosch and tarot), and like a wild-card something that had seemed irrelevant to me came shooting through time with such grace it just about broke my heart.

DYLAN's always had the ability to work on two levels. One has been his public significance, most particularly in the 60s. *The Times They Are A-Changin'* Bob Dylan marked the early maturation of his love for Hank Williams, Robert Johnson and politicised folk wrapped up in the image of a proletarian James Dean. His songs

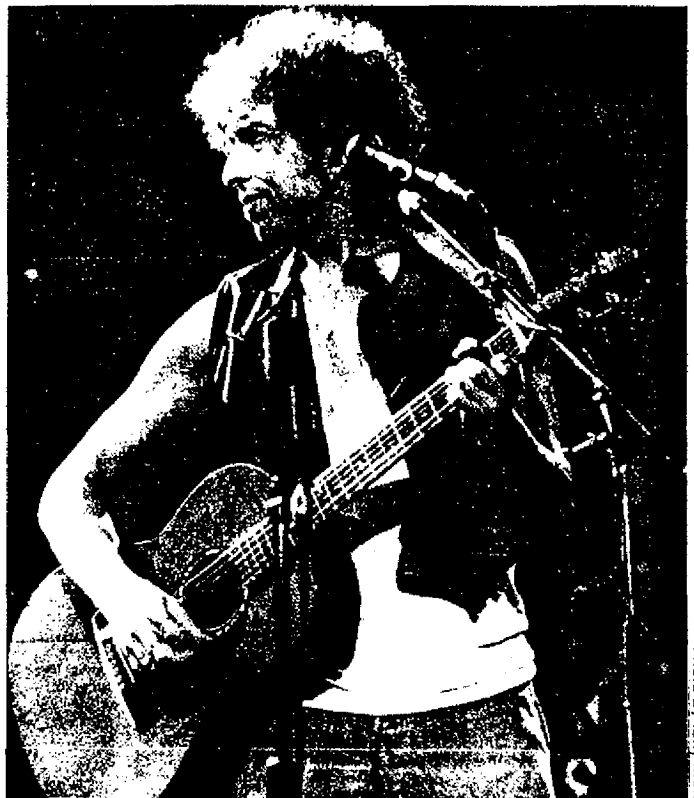
were anthems and parables for social change in America, most particularly the Civil Rights struggle and anti-Vietnam feeling. By the time his career met the stellar overdrive of 1966's *Highway Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde*, the folkie politicians were declaring him a sell out and most of America's literary establishment were slamming his acclaim as the poet of the era.

DYLAN was moving with the velocity of the age, and the textual energy of 1966 might be summed up in his electric guitars, instead of acoustic), druggy surrealism, loving tongue poetics and superb motorbikist all-round hipness. Jimi Hendrix modeled his hair on Dylan's. The Beatles were introduced to marijuana by him. And he singlehandedly transformed the face of popular music by politicising it as a form, giving rebellion abstract and experimental energy, and sexualising intellect in lyric the way Presley had energised performance and expression in the 50s. Too much, man!

IN a motorbike accident at the absolute zenith of his career, Dylan snapped his neck and went into retreat at Woodstock. Holed up with a wife and family carefully protected from the spotlight that so depressingly played across his relationship with Joan Baez in the dazzling years before, the married, countin' Dylan recorded records like the austere, reflective and casual *John Wesley Harding*, the long hidden, much booed, booze-on-pot party, (with The Band) known as the *Basement Tapes*, and the clear, mellowed country of *Nashville Skyline*. It was at this point his friendship with Johnny Cash began.

DYLAN had moved away from the centre stage, into more personal and relaxed territory. For some that was a betrayal as domestic harmony, homespun wisdom and allegorical morality (a hint of the Biblical future) replaced the anarchic, dangerous Hamlet of the mid-60s, that very romantic figure folkies saw as a trolar acrobat. Dylan shed audiences and identities like dead skin, a paradigm of his own lyrical sword, "Not busy being born, busy dying".

It was the breakup with his wife Sara Lowndes that would fuel one of the great masterpieces of his career, the love-wrought *Blood On The Tracks*. That same year in 1975, Joan Baez would recall, "When I finally met and became friends with Sara, we talked for hours about those days when the Original Vagabond was two-timing



— Photo by Tony Mart

us. I told Sara that I'd never found Bob to be much as giving gifts, but that once he had bought me a green corduroy coat, and told me to keep a lovely blue nightgown from the Woodstock house. 'Oh,' said Sara, 'that's where it went!' "

AFTER *Blood* came *Desire*, then the Christian years flaring with Old Testament, gospel-charged joy and pain. Dylan's vitality lays with his mercurial nature, his continuing need to reinvent the terms we receive him on: smalltown Jewish boy, New York troubadour, wail, folk-country cool, lute tale-teller, groovy black-booted rock surrealist, laidback woody family man, love-shattered poetic loner, Christian prophetiser, emotional politician. An album as recent as *Oh Mercy*, produced by Daniel Lanois, (U2, Neville Brothers), shows him ever-capable of greatness in its bruised, double-edged barbs and undertows of personal sadness. Amid it all is the vengeful turn of phrase, and an understanding that opportunistic American materialism (*Broken Laws*) and love's consumption, (*What Was It You Wanted?*) marked the end of the 80s.

LIKE old bluesmen, Dylan seems to need to keep keeping on, to play and be. Just past 50 years of age, he represents the aging of rock and roll as a culture, a personal statement to the fact that at its best and most honest, for all its inconsistencies, it can still be a genre where people get old and stay creative.

DYLAN no longer defines or is the constellational force of the era. He is the icon of lucked-up genius, an artist of inconsistent, whimsical and obscure temperaments.

To see him on the New Year's Day replay of *One Irish Rover* on the ABC, a portrait of Van Morrison where Dylan appeared as a guest, was to witness that ruin in terrible glory. Backed by the open, lost air of ancient Greece and a warm Mediterranean sun, Morrison sang *Foreign Window* to Dylan, about a man "bearing down the suffering road" with the French poet Rimbaud for company. The allusion to the French seer who saw too much too early and

went into eternal exile, took on disturbingly personal poetry as the realisation awakened between two of rock 'n' roll's greatest survivors that Morrison was accidentally singing about the very fibre of Dylan's life.

OPPOSITE Morrison's ecstatic, commanding passion, Dylan was a shattered portrait of hooded wariness and thin breath, scattering words and half-smearing phrases out of time. With his backing vocals, Dylan was aware of giving Morrison a poem of his own lost spirit.

RUMOURS have always encircled him, especially the latter days: heroin junkie, madman ... the kaleidoscope of a great chameleon atomising into tragedy. From the shadowy cusp of fallen dedication, he can pull on hundreds of great songs and mark his path, the magic and loss of his centrality in culture if not his talent.

HOW must the Jewish boy from Hibbing, Minnesota who was once Robert Zimmerman look back on it all? Look back on leaving a town whose open-cut mine was hopelessly acclaimed in the pursuit of tourist dollars as the "biggest man-made hole on earth"? Certainly he knows he answered with creative force that has put him in the company of Picasso, Miles Davis and other masters of the century.

WHAT was it he wrote on the sleeve-notes to *Desire*? "Where do I begin ... on the heels of Rimbaud moving like a dancing bullet thru the secret streets of a hot New Jersey night filled with venom and wonder? Ah, all is clouded ... the Zen Buddhists would try to answer his restlessness with *upaya* or 'skillful means': a method understood as 'giving a child a yellow leaf to stop it crying for gold' "

Bob Dylan, once again at the State Theatre, Thursday 16 April. Dylan started his series of Sydney dates Monday 23 and plays tonight Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 before heading up to Brisbane for a date sharing the bill with Bonnie Raitt and Marc Cohn. Then he's back to play Monday April 13, Tuesday 14, Wednesday 15 and now Thursday 16.



■ Who is America's finest contemporary poet? According to Imre Saluszinsky, it's Robert Zimmerman, aka Bob Dylan

The genius of Dylan

ROBERT Allen Zimmerman (b. May 24, 1941) is the most important poet to have emerged in the United States since the death of Wallace Stevens in 1954. And he is a very unusual fellow — especially for a poet.

Unlike most major American poets, Zimmerman was born a Jew, and into the lower-middle classes (his father was the part-owner of a hardware store). Unlike most major American poets, Zimmerman is from the Midwest, not from any of the traditional centres of culture along the north-eastern seaboard. Unlike most major American poets, he does not have a tertiary education. And unlike most major American poets — or poets anywhere — he is rich and famous.

For all of these oddities, though, Zimmerman's claim to poetic greatness is beyond question. He is the author of 26 collections of poetry, which have appeared between 1962 and 1991. Although all of them contain fine poems, two alone, *Blood on the Tracks* (1975) and *Desire* (1976), would be enough to ensure Zimmerman's lasting poetic greatness.

But Zimmerman's most compelling creation is to be found in none of the 26 texts mentioned. His masterpiece is a character — a character called Bob Dylan. At the moment that he became Bob Dylan, sometime late in 1968, Robert Allen Zimmerman created one of the most complicated and fascinating personae in 20th-century poetry.

Now the time has come for critics to begin the serious work of picking apart the complicated skein of traditions that contribute to Dylan's art. Evasive about many things, Dylan has been perfectly open about his early influences: "I came out of the wilderness and just naturally fell in with the Beat scene ... it was Jack Kerouac, Ginsberg, Corso and Ferlinghetti ... I got in at the tail-end of that and it was magic."

The Dylan of the early and mid-'60s is a Beat poet. Indeed, with his chains and loops of surreal, stream-of-consciousness imagery, with his street-talk idiom, with his hostility to "straight" social-conditioning, and with his sense of the continent of America as a challenge that has to be faced and crossed — early Dylan is the Beat poet.

*Johnny's in the basement
Mixing up the medicine
I'm on the pavement
Thinking about the government
The man in the trench coat
Badge out, laid off
Says he's got a bad cough
Wants to get paid off*

It is hardly surprising that an unusually creative young poet, just breaking out of a claustrophobic, small-town upbringing in the late '50s, should have turned to the Beat aesthetic for inspiration. After all, it was the most exciting, subversive thing in the air, but it was not the only thing. For example, Dylan also picked up from Modernist poets such as T.S. Eliot (and his French sym-

bolist precursors) a sense of the self as unstable, elusive, and capable of limitless reinvigoration:

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

This sense of the endless twists and permutations of the self — so that, for example, two people who meet again after a separation may have become quite different people — eventually climaxes in those masterpieces scattered across *Blood on the Tracks*: poems like *Tangled up in Blue* and *Shelter from the Storm*.

Also among the early influences was '60s Existentialism, which warned Dylan about all of the malign forces that threaten to fix and stabilise the self unless its authenticity is jealously guarded. These forces include social canons of patriotism and decency: "the enemy I see wears a cloak of decency".

Hence Dylan's lifelong infatuation with rebels and outcasts who upbraid or discountenance social propriety: Woody Guthrie, Joey Gallo, Reuben Carter, Lenny Bruce, and, most notably, Jesus Christ. But Dylan also has an Existentialist's sense of the threats to the self and freedom that issue from family ("I ain't gonna work for Maggie's pa no more/ Well, he puts his cigar/ Out in your face just for kicks") and, even more disturbingly, from the entrapments of love:

*She wears an Egyptian ring
That sparkles before she speaks
She's a hypnotist collector,
You are a walking antique*

Most of these connections have been made before. What has not been seen, I think, is that they are all quite secondary. Because, above all, Dylan, as a poet, is an American Romantic visionary, in the tradition of Dickinson, Hawthorne, Whitman and Thoreau. In other words, he is one more among the distinguished progeny of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882).

Dylan's debt to Emerson has hardly been noticed, and yet he is a thoroughly traditional Emersonian Transcendentalist. In all of his guises, Dylan preaches the Emersonian gospel of "self-reliance". Here is Emerson: "Trust (thyself); every heart vibrates to that iron string." And Dylan: "Trust yourself/ Trust yourself to know the way that will prove true in the end."

In fact, the Beat idea of the American continent as the ultimate source of all inspiration comes from Emerson, who singlehandedly convinced the young American poets and thinkers of the 19th century that they could forget Europe and history, and forge an original relation to nature. And the radical individualism of the Existentialists, with its sense of all worldly power as corrupt and corrupting: that is also there in Emerson, who writes: "Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members."

Emerson's chief lesson — that memory and history are death to the creative spirit, which must be committed to novelty and change — is evident everywhere in Dylan, who saw immediately that one

way of changing the times is simply to assert that they already are a-changin'.

This spirit of Emerson and Hawthorne — who looked West from New England and there, in the opposite direction to Europe, found a symbol of action and renewal — is still alive in Dylan's verse:

*Leave your stepping stones behind,
something calls for you.
Forget the dead you've left, they will
not follow you ...
Strike another match, go start anew
And it's all over now, Baby Blue.*

Self-reliance is not in every respect a comforting or easy truth to live by: it teaches that we must compete and struggle endlessly, if we are to escape the limiting influence of others.

This side of the Emersonian legacy is apparent in all those characters Dylan conjures who once upon a time had it all over him, who, once upon a time, dressed so fine, and threw the bums a dime. But now they neither talk so loud nor seem so proud:

*You got a lotta nerve
To say you are my friend
When I was down
You just stood there grinning*

This is the kind of hard justice that operates in this world. But Dylan, like Emerson, is a Transcendentalist, and has always envisaged a more ultimate justice. Seen against this eternal background, worldly power looks tenuous and fragile, so that "even the President of the United States/ Sometimes must have/ To stand naked". Dylan's social commentary is less a form of protest than an apocalyptic challenge to America: return to a vision of innocence and honesty, or die.

When Dylan started to write poems that were directly about God, in the late '70s and early '80s, he was written off by a section of his audience, who seemed not to have noticed that Dylan had never written about anything but God.

Looking for a theology across the body of Dylan's work, I do not think that it is possible to find anything that is orthodox from either a Christian or a Jewish perspective. Dylan's religion — the religion that is in the poems — so utterly privileges the individual's search for spiritual authenticity, for the inner light, over any sense of community, that once again it is impossible to see it as anything but the highly displaced version of Protestantism that we call Romanticism.

"Power ceases in the instant of repose," wrote Emerson. "It resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state." This is why Robert Zimmerman's greatest work is Bob Dylan: nowhere more clearly than in Dylan's own ceaseless self-fashionings is the potency of the self, and its knowledge that "he not busy being born/ is busy dying", visible. Dylan said once: "What hangs everybody up is that I'm not stopping." Now on his fourth visit to Australia, he has for some years been embarked on what he calls the "neverending tour". There could be no better description of the Emersonian authentic life.

Bob Dylan's artistic achievement now stretches across 30 years, and most of us who've lived those years with our eyes and ears open have managed to see something of our own inner visions and crises reflected in the spectacular light that has been cast by this courageous and original man.

■ Imre Saluszinsky is senior lecturer in English at the University of Newcastle.

DATELINE: 1965

DYLAN, "TAMBOURINE MAN" AND THE BIRTH OF FOLK-ROCK

To coincide with The Big D's latest tour, CHRISTIE ELIEZER takes you back to a distant time when Dylan was to change the face of rock and roll forever.

THE BYRDS kicked off their career in January 1965 with one of pop's most brilliant singles. It was a masterstroke on the one hand; on the other, the band had to spend most of its career trying to live up to its promise. A pity, because they were inventive musicians, and the closest thing America had to defend itself against the Beatles-led British Invasion.

But "Tambourine Man" was a breakthrough in a lot of ways.

It's seen as inventing folk-rock. In actual sense, it served to make sense of the term. The Byrds themselves were ex-folkies who didn't see what they were doing as folk-rock but a "new kind of folk music". As Roger McGuinn spelled it out (more in hindsight, one suspects) in his sleeve-notes of the first Byrds LP "the instrumentation is changing somewhat to meet the nuclear explosion and jet age...Although the folk instrumentation is changing, it's still folk music. Actually you can call it whatever you like." McGuinn also dubbed their sound "space-folk".

Secondly, the No. 1 success of "Mr. Tambourine Man" also showed that folk music didn't have to be an "underground" thing, but one which could appeal to rock audiences and make money. In their wake came more similar-sounding acts like Lovin' Spoonful, Mamas & Papas, Turtles, Love, The Seeds and Simon & Garfunkel. The great psychedelic bands like Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead started out as folk-rock acts. The old folkies went electric and/or worked with rock bands.

But the most important thing about "Mr. Tambourine Man" was that it catapulted Bob Dylan into the rock scene. He ultimately became the single most significant force in rock music in the '60s.

FLIRTING WITH ROCK

Dylan had been flirting with rock long before "Mr. Tambourine Man". He'd been hanging out with The Rolling Stones in London and turned The Beatles on to pot, and wanted to be as big as them, maybe tempted to taste the hysteria that surrounded them.

He'd been edging towards rock for some time, but he was so huge in the folk circles that he needed something to spur him on. "Mr. Tambourine Man" topping the charts proved that he could as easily replace his folk following with the larger rock audience.

He'd always been ambitious. He'd grown up in a fairly wealthy middle class Jewish family in Hibbing, Minnesota, up near the Canadian border. He was the first kid in the town to ride

a motorbike and wear a leather coat. By the time he was 19, he'd rejected his family and headed for New York.

He arrived in early 1961, and headed straight for the folk clubs of the arty Greenwich Village, initially playing for nothing while he chummed up with the other folkies like Joan Baez, Tom Paxton, Odessa and Phil Ochs. They were serious, worried endlessly about The Bomb and black rights, and cringed at any mention of Top 40 success because it meant "selling out."

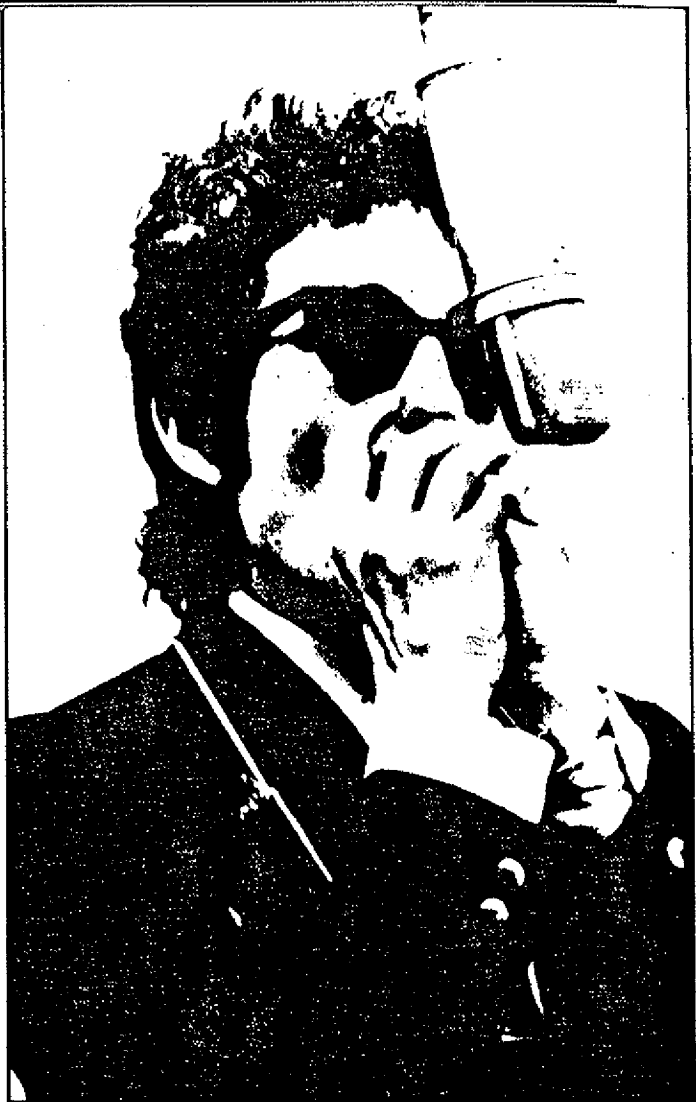
Dylan quickly became their new leader. He was young, hungry, and so angelic-looking he'd be asked his ID when he played the clubs and for male and female folkies to want to "****" him. It also helped that he had denied his middle class background (pooh! bad word!) and claimed to be an orphan from New Mexico. He'd also decided that he'd rather write his own songs rather than play the usual irrelevant standards. They were powerful numbers: America's greatest folk hero Woody Guthrie acclaimed him as his successor, and soon every other folkie had started including "Blowin' in the Wind", "Masters of War", "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" and "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" (about a black servant who was caned to death) in their set.

It's not hard to see why there was such an excitement about Dylan. There was such power in his songs that people were crying and announcing their lives changed, poet/playwright Mike McCure told of a friend who listened to the first Dylan album and instantly changed her self-image from romantic loser to positive writer.

Joan Baez, the folk Queen who had an affair with Dylan said: "Bobby's expressing what I — and other young people — feel I want to say. Most of the protest songs about the bomb and racial prejudice and conformity are stupid. They have no beauty. But Bobby's songs are powerful as poetry and powerful as music. And, oh God, how that boy can sing!"

Without airplay, he was selling out shows and his first LP went gold. In 1963, the clean-cut Peter Paul & Mary took "Blowin' in the Wind" to the top of the US charts, selling a million, and inspired 50 other covers. He quite liked being called a poet. His songwriting grew in leaps and bounds. As he grew more successful, he became more ruthless, dropped old friends, surrounded himself with hangers-on and bodyguards and hiding himself in limos.

He soon dropped protest and moved to love songs, full of lovely imagery and Biblical metaphors. "Mr. Tambourine Man" was actually the first real Dylan song, in that it didn't sound like it was influenced by black blues or US folk except maybe Celtic music. It was "escapist". It was seen as a drug trip, (considered something of a bold step although black bluesmen had been singing about drugs since the '30s) the verses lifting like smoke rings. A recurring theme in Dylan's songs are about outcasts, magicians and circus freaks (hence the white-face look in his 1978 and 1991 tours and the *Renaldo & Clara* movie?), and "Mr. Tambourine Man" seemed to tie these three together. Others also hailed the song as a call to spirituality, and Dylan's urging us to follow our subconscious as far as it'd go.



Dylan records "Like A Rolling Stone"

Little wonder, then, that it was the best choice to crack a rock audience.

The amazing thing is that The Byrds' leader Roger McGuinn, wasn't particularly a Dylan fan. He knew him from the old days, when McGuinn was into crewcuts and \$400 suits. He didn't rate Dylan, and confessed to *Sounds* in August 1971: "I regarded him as a competitor. I remember being very surprised to see his first CBS album because I didn't think he was good enough to get a recording contract."

Dylan had cut a demo of "Mr. Tambourine Man" in mid-1964 with fellow-folkie Ramblin' Jack Elliott, possibly as a duet. But Elliott was with another record company, so Columbia weren't interested. But a copy reached The Byrds' manager Jim Dickson, and urged them to record it, even before Dylan had cut it himself. The Byrds' Chris Hillman was a Dylan fan and swung his weight behind it.

McGuinn might not have personally rated Dylan, but he was no fool. He knew Dylan was being rated as the Next Big Thing, and McGuinn was a trend-spotter who knew rock was going to hit big. He also wrestled control of the band, even though Gene Clark was a more melodic singer, McGuinn manoeuvred himself into singing it, and in the public's eye became The Byrds' lead singer although they'd formed as a democratic band with three singers. Only McGuinn featured on the track; the instruments were played by session men. (This wouldn't stop him from writing "So You Wanna Be A Rock 'n' Roll Star" sneering at The Monkees'-type plastic fame!)

He dropped three verses, keeping the most "contemporary" between the choruses, slowed it down, and admits singing it deliberately as a cross between Dylan and Lennon. A Christian and a sci-fi freak, he interpreted the song mystically as a "conversation with God", that he was "so excited by spiritualism he wanted to follow God. To this day, he says, he still doesn't know what Dylan had meant when he wrote it.

TENTATIVE STEPS

Even before Dylan took his first tentative steps to rock music, he'd started influencing other acts. His 1964 album *Another Side Of Bob Dylan* showed him playing piano (his first

instrument, in fact). His love songs were a far cry from the June/Moon mush of pop. In Dylan's songs, falling in love and loving the same person forever were not the highpoints of one's life.

Dylan said — cut the crap. Nobody owns anybody, love doesn't last forever, and it's a waste of energy to try. That attitude had a phenomenal influence. John Lennon wrote "You've Got To Hide Your Love Away" as a Dylan copy, breaking The Beatles' own mould. The revolution in pop was starting.

That year, Dylan had toured England, and when he returned to New York, he enthused to a buddy "My God, ya oughta hear what's going down over there. Eric Burdon...he's doing 'House Of The Rising Sun' in rock. Rock! It's just wild!"

Burdon's band The Animals had found "House Of The Rising Sun", an old folk/blues standard, on Dylan's first LP, added guitar and organ and had a No. 1 smash. Dylan's producer at the time Tom Wilson regards the Animals' track as the first ever "folk rock". By which logic he could have looked back to The Animals' first ever single "Baby Let Me Take You Home", a cleaned up version of another song they learned from Dylan. "Baby Let Me Follow You Down".

In 1965, Dylan made his own move. In January he saw The Byrds rehearsing his songs in L.A., liked what he heard and later jammed with them at Ciro's. They sent him an advance copy of "Mr. Tambourine Man" and he knew he was right.

A few months later, sessions began for his fifth album *Bringing It All Back Home*. According to Tom Wilson (and Dylan hasn't disagreed with it), it was Wilson who suggested they should put some electrical backing with some songs. One side of the LP was solo acoustic, the other was with an electric band. From that LP was released "Subterranean Homesick Blues", which went Top 10 in Britain and launched a whole breed of "protest" acts there, but the single (issued as his first ever US single in April 1965) barely scratched the lower rungs of the US Top 40. Audiences and radio still weren't ready.

His American audiences (mostly old folkies and college kids) who saw pop as rubbish and

a commercial rip-off, had already seen his move from Protest as a betrayal. But blasphemy came in July when Dylan appeared at the Newport Folk Festival, carrying an electric guitar and backed by the Butterfield Blues Band.

The reaction was horrid. People booed or sat in stunned silence. After three songs, a tearful Dylan went off stage and returned with just an acoustic, doing a significant "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" with visible sadness. He reportedly wept after the show. At another folk festival, people hissed "traitor!" and "where's Ringo?" Dylan half-heartedly appeased them: "ahh come on!"

But throughout, Dylan's attitude was — I'm right, they're wrong.

In August, just a month after Newport, Dylan released *Highway 61 Revisited*, which again showed him leaping ahead of what was expected. There was no protest. He wasn't even just marrying rock instruments with old folk songs, as The Animals and The Byrds were doing. What El Dyl was doing was to marry rock with new urban poetry with harsh scintillating lyrics that fitted the electricity in the music.

The album included the epic 12-minute "Desolation Row", the astonishing "Ballad Of A Thin Man" (was the Mr. Jones about Brian Jones of the Stones?) and, in all them powerful and original gems, the masterpiece "Like A Rolling Stone". With Mike Bloomfield on guitar and Al Kooper on guitar, Dylan's spiteful words and surrealistic imagery still fit to this day.

"Like A Rolling Stone" was an astounding breath of fresh air, a total break through for rock music. It opened new doors. Even some of those hostile to pop rock saw it could be used for community reality, rather than inane rhymes and verses that did nothing more than "keep the customer satisfied" and make instant money.

Over in England, The Beatles, The Stones and the rest of the Swinging Sixties bands took note. So too did the rest of the American scene.

On January 20, 1968, when Bruce Springsteen inducted Dylan into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in New York, he remembered his first encounter with Bob:

"My God, you oughta hear what's going down over there, Eric Burdon . . . he's doing 'House Of The Rising Sun' in rock. In rock! It's wild!"

"The first time I heard Bob Dylan, I was in the car with my mother listening to (Radio) WMCA and on came that snare shot that sounded like somebody'd kicked open the door to your mind: 'Like A Rolling Stone'. My mother — she was no stuff with rock and roll, she liked the music — sat there for a minute, then looked at me and said 'That guy can't sing'. But I knew she was wrong. I sat there and I didn't say nothing but I knew that I was listening to the toughest voice that I had ever heard. It was lean and it sounded somehow simultaneously young and adult."

He remembers then rushing out and buying the single, playing it at home, finding out the factory had made a mistake and he had a Lenny Welch song. He went back to the store and got the Dylan track. He then went back and got *Highway 61 Revisited*.

That was all I played for weeks, looking at the cover with Bob in that satin blue jacket and the Triumph motorcycle shirt.

"When I was a kid, Bob's voice somehow thrilled and scared me, it made me feel kinda responsibly innocent — it still does — when I reached down and touched what little worldliness a 15-year old high school kid in New Jersey had in him at that time."

"Dylan was a revolutionary. Bob freed your mind the way Elvis freed your body. He showed us that just because the music was innately physical did not mean that it was anti-intellectual. He had the vision and the talent to make a pop song that contained the whole world. He invented a new way a pop singer could sound, broke through the limitations of what a recording artist could achieve and changed the face of rock and roll forever."

WORLD TOUR

Dylan launched himself on a world tour with The Hawks, who'd been a back-up band for Ronnie Hawkins, an Arkansas R&B singer who'd found fame in Canada. There are some who'd say that Dylan & The Hawks were, on that tour, the greatest rock band ever...visually and musically. Bob and Robbie Robertson were two cosmic soul-mates, trading licks, a marriage of blues and honky-tonk but still sounding elegant and visionary. The Hawks — and especially Robertson — brought something else out in Dylan that made him reach out



Cooling off

and touch audiences he had never before. They gave his music a sense of drama. With flashing lights, he looked every bit a rock star. The Hawks (later The Band) were such a great band that Dylan could get on with exuding his charisma and delivering, without worrying if the band behind him would blow it.

It was, nevertheless, a controversial tour: people booed, and in Australia the press gave him a real hammering.

Dylan hoped that he'd get a better time in England, but was wrong. At every show through the country, many booed and/or walked out. After two hostile London shows, he flew to Paris and went down a storm. Then he returned to London for the Royal Albert Hall and faced the same hostility.

"Like A Rolling Stone" was the last song on the set. The three guitarists would turn their back on the crowd and face the drummer. He'd raise his sticks above his head and, CRASH!, bring it down like a rifle shot. Dylan would leap in the air, and as his feet touched the stage, Robertson would pull out that famous riff like the "mathematical guitar genius" Bob said he was.

But at the Albert Hall show, just before the end, someone screamed out "Judas!" Dylan paused and stepped up to the microphone and spoke for the first time in the one-and-a-half-hour set: "I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!"

Robertson started the riff, Dylan shouted out "YOU'RE A LIAR!" and stormed into the song.

How does it feel?

Ahhhhh, How does it feel?

To be on your own!

Well, No! Direction! HOME!

LIKE A COMPLETE UNKNOWN

LIKE A ROLLING STONE!

Dylan never let up. A month later, he'd returned to the US and issued the double-LP *Blonde On Blonde*, that once again left everybody behind. It was an exquisite concept album that created its own scene, flowing with surrealism and despair yet soaked with breathtaking poetic vision and sensuality.

As rock peers and audiences gasped, in July 1966 Dylan had a bad motorcycle smash which, rumours went at the time, left him with a broken neck. He disappeared for two years. During that time, psychedelia reigned and tore into the charts. The world changed. The Beatles rushed out *Sgt. Pepper* and The Stones dropped more acid and turned up with *Their Satanic Majesties Request* while in America Jefferson Airplane and Grateful Dead became the darlings of the hippies.

Dylan finally made a comeback in January 1968 at a Woody Guthrie Memorial Concert at Carnegie Hall in New York. This was followed by John Wesley Harding. Everybody waited with bated breath: how was he going to leave *Sgt. Pepper* behind?

But he shocked everybody. It was country music, as unhip as anything. "It's love and love alone, it makes the world go round." "No one realised it then, but progressive music had by already become pretentious and clichéd and aimless. Dylan merely punctured the whole scene. Critics and audiences hissed. Yet a few months later, The Beatles were in India writing acoustic songs about love. The Stones went back to hard rock with "Jumpin' Jack Flash". The Band's own *Music From The Big Pink* was so spectacular in its simplicity that music changed, and paved the way for a host of singer/songwriters like James Taylor, Carole King and Cat Stevens became the new flavour. Dylan was, once again, one step ahead.

PATHFINDER TO PEERS

Despite the hoo-hah about Dylan's drift to rock, he was still a path-finder to his peers. Joan Baez cut a rock and roll album. Eric Andersen, an old Dylan buddy from the Greenwich Village days, re-recorded his 1966 acoustic album *Bout Changes And Things* with a band. Other folkies picked up electric instruments, while trad folkie Pete Seeger re-recorded with three members of The Blues Project.

Protest hit the charts, and as with everything, opportunists watered it down and killed it off. Sonny & Cher rushed out in hippie gear and a neat line in "why don't they understand us" (as in "I Got You Babe": "So don't let them say your hair's too long/I don't care, with you I can't go wrong"), got on prime TV, had heaps of hits and became the teenyboppers' rave.

Lou Adler of Dunhill Records gave a copy of *Highway 61* to his best songwriter P.F. Sloan, told him to listen to it and come back with similar songs. Among the songs was "Eve Of Destruction", which had a go at everything:

You don't believe in war, what's that gun you're lovin'?

Even the Jordan River is overflowing... If the button's pushed, no one to save... ...marches alone can't bring integration While human respect is disintegratin' Think of all the hate there is in Red China Then look at the situation in Alabama

Sung by former New Christy Minstrel, Barry McGuire, it was totally contrived and insincere. But "Eve Of Destruction" was a massive multi-million seller around the world. Over in England, they toted Donovan as the new Dylan, except he didn't have the vision.

No little wonder then that by 1966, Protest was stone cold dead. It wasn't apparent to audiences then, who howled when Dylan left it behind. But he had been right all along.

Dylan opened the door for other folkies who now became sophisticated — Simon & Garfunkel, Lovin' Spoonful who came from New York, and echoed protest with good time jug music and classics like "Do You Believe In Magic" and "Summer In The City", and the Mamas & The Papas who chartered with "California Dreaming" and "Monday Monday".

The spirit of these records was a foretaste of Love and Peace in 1967.

But most important, Dylan had allowed teenagers to tap into revolution and believing in attitudes different to that of their parents. He'd also made pop a medium of ideas and which could exist outside of what the music industry wanted. These two factors were crucial in the subsequent rise of West Coast rock (which allowed San Francisco to replace London as pop's new center), flower power and psychedelia.

Says Springsteen: "Without Bob, The Beatles wouldn't have made *Sgt. Pepper*, The Beach Boys wouldn't have made *Pet Sounds*, The Sex Pistols wouldn't have made 'God Save The Queen', U2 wouldn't have done 'Pride (In The Name Of Love)', Marvin Gaye wouldn't have done *What's Going On*, The Count Five would not have done 'Psychotic Reaction', Grandmaster Flash might not have done 'The Message' and there never would have been a group named The Electric Prunes."

To this day, wherever great rock music is being made, there is the shadow of Bob Dylan. Bob's own modern work has gone unjustly under-appreciated because it's had to stand in that shadow.

Certainly Dylan's works also opened up blacks to pop. Soul shouter Otis Redding loved "It Ain't Me Babe" that he intended to cut a version, but perished in an air crash before he did. Jimi Hendrix's consummate interpretation of "All Along The Watchtower" took it to black and hard rock fans. Judas Priest took their name from a Dylan song.

As for Dylan, he's still fighting the '60s, the Legend myth. The fact that fans cling so much to that myth is a frightening expose of ourselves. More so is journalist Robert Shelton's horrified admission that he turned down no less than six publishers for a Dylan book, either because they just wanted the dirt on his private life or as one suggested, they'd sell more copies if there was any insinuation he was gay. When you consider Dylan's immense contribution to music and society in general, no doubt the jackal instinct in the world keeps him paranoid and insecure.



Notice Carnaby Street influence on first Australian tour

FOREIGN LEGEND

Stop calling me a legend, whines Bobby in between a harmonica solo. On his latest tour, he finds he's playing to a new teenage audience, which regards him more as a talented singer/songwriter than anyone's personal saviour. KEITH BELANGER reports from Chicago on the tour that's coming to Australia

IT WAS midnight by the time the tour bus eased itself onto the cobblestone driveway of the Ambassador East Hotel in Chicago. Bob Dylan and his three-piece band had just finished a two-hour set at the nearby Evanston Campus of Northwest University, a powerful show that ended with a two-song encore. Dylan, wearing an old sweatshirt and leather jacket slung around his thin shoulders, stood out in the cold watching the band disappear into their rooms for a quick nightcap and sleep.

But a waiter at the hotel restaurant had told him about a blues club down the block, and Dylan wasn't ready to turn in yet. So, with an entourage that included a bodyguard, a tour

aid and a journalist from the LA Times, they wandered off into the chilly night for an hour of blues and then to a nondescript diner for some minestrone.

In 1992 Dylan no longer has to prove his worth to himself or to anybody. He has achieved more than anyone humanly could. It doesn't bother him he's not Sony's biggest seller, nor does he see it as a step down from playing 20,000-capacity auditoriums to the small halls and colleges he's doing on the current *Never Ending Tour* playing to 4000 people per night. He digs the closeness and the warmth, he says. He'll keep doing this until it stops being fun and stop. Do something else until he gets the urge to hit the road again.

Despite his obsession with privacy, Dylan has the sort of charisma that Mick Jagger or Marlon Brando or Muhammad Ali have — all eyes are fascinated on them as soon as they come into view. All eyes are on them even when they want to escape the world for a time. Thirty years in the spotlight as a messiah hasn't given Dylan a star trip. On tour, when the bus stops outside a diner, he gets out and gets his own sandwiches rather than send a lackey. He still goes to clubs, walks around the streets. If he has someone to drive him around, it's only because he's a terrible driver, too busy thinking about song ideas than what's on the road, that close friends are terrified if he gets behind the wheel.

If he doesn't do many interviews (when he turned 50 last May he turned down 300 requests) it's because he values his privacy and knows his survival depends on him not giving too much of himself away. When you've been through the awesome pressure of people rummaging through your dustbins to find a clue to the Meaning Of Life, or have five-page magazine spreads dissecting every song line for symbolic revelations when all you wanted was to rhyme, one gets more than paranoid. When he agrees to an interview there are ground rules: no questions about his former 13-year marriage to Sara Lowndes, his four grown-up children, what he does with his money, or his long time girlfriend Carol Childs who works as a talent scout with Elektra Records in LA.

A few days before, a fan came into the tour bus and presented him with a 278-page book called *Tangled Up In Tapes Revisited*, which lists every song and in what order at virtually every Dylan concert between 1974 to 1989. The dude told him he could keep it as a souvenir. Dylan replied "naah, I've already done all those places and done all those things," pausing to smile before adding "now if you ever find a book out there that's going to tell me where I'm going, I might be interested".

This is the angle that Dylan dangles before journalists — I'm sick of being considered a legend, I'm sick of the past, I'm only interested in today and maybe tomorrow. To think too far ahead is a sign of vanity. Yet a musician working with him will say: you know what makes him different? He sees the end of things. The rest of us, we're into something, it's as if it's going to last forever. Dylan, he's in just as deep, but he knows it's not going to last.

WHAT WAS uppermost in his mind, after the Northwest University gig, as he sat in the diner finishing off his soup, was that the tour was playing to kids in their late teens and early 20s. The ones who weren't even born when "Blowin' in the Wind" sparked off a series of classic songs that soundtrack the '60s, the modern day fans who might dismiss a lot of pop as junk culture product, and are drawn to acts like U2, Tracy Chapman or Simple Minds because they cling on to the notion that rock music should say something to its audience about its times and changes. Dylan's current audience see him as a gifted artist, one who has a fascinating way with words that few in '90s rock can match. They don't see him as some legend or personal saviour — and that suits Dylan just fine.

"Older people, people my age, don't come out no more," he told the journalist, unaware of the curious eyes from the other corners of the diner. "A lot of the shows over the years was people coming out of curiosity, and their curiosity wasn't fulfilled. They weren't transported back to the '60s, lightning didn't strike."

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

Earlier in the evening, the faithful and the curious had trooped into the college auditorium, wrapped in mufflers and heavy coats. Some had never seen Dylan live before. 19-year-old Keith Boucher said to me: "I want to show respect for him, I want Dylan to realise that this is an intelligent audience." Yet halfway through the show, when hundreds had stampeded the stage, Boucher was among them, wolf whistling, fists in the air.

This wasn't a modern day concert, with smoke bombs, lasers and, heavens, backing tapes. There were no dancing girls or twin turntables. Tonight, dressed in black shirt and striped black pants, he'd merely shambled onto the stage with his three-piece band and, without a greeting, ploughed into a set that included the best from the '60s through to the present. The lighting was as subdued and mysterious as Dylan's clothing, yet the sheer power of the music mesmerised the crowd.

Dylan has never bothered in his career about the audience, he's never worked for them, never considered their preconceived ideas, never cared if they liked him or approved. It was always the songs that were important, how he felt they should be handled at a certain time. There have been some powerful shows on the tour: some late-night ones also, like the Madison show the night after. At tonight's unifying, he was punching emotion into every line, confirming his statement that his songs were still real to him, whether they be the older ones like "Just Like A Woman" or "Like A Rolling Stone" or something newer like "Changing Of The Guard". And if there was a visible whoop of recognition for "All Along The Watchtower", more because of the U2 and Hendrix versions, well, that was fine too.

It's hard to know if he enjoys touring, if he enjoys any thing — I never seek pleasure. There was a time years ago when I sought after a lot of pleasure because I had a lot of pain. But I found there was a subtle relationship between pleasure and pain. So now I do what I have to do without looking for pleasure in it.

It's a Buddhist concept, to distance yourself from pleasure and pain, but Dylan sees it more as survival. In any case, every time he goes back on the road, people keep asking: why? This tour's been no different, neither is his explanation.

"Well, why did I do the last one," he'll scowl. "I'm doing this one for the same reason I did the last one... it was for the same reason or another, but I can't remember what the reason is any more."

Some papers say it's for the money.

"They always say that. There are more important things in the world than money. It means that to the people who write these articles, the most important thing in the world is money. They could be saying that I'm doing the tour to meet girls or to see the world. Actually it's all I know how to do."

Is it so surprising that I'm on the road? What else would I be doing in this life — meditate on the mountain? Whatever someone finds fulfilling, whatever his or her purpose is — that's all it is.

What the current tour — winging its way to Australia — shows is Dylan as a magical performer, something that's taken a backseat to his writing and his myths. Tonight's show pulled together all the different kinds of art he's practiced — protest, improvisation, acoustic guitars, electric sounds — into one show. In the past he's used his insecurity to make constant changes in his career: to keep the songs afresh. He's played with a variety of people — from The Band to the Rolling Thunder Revue to Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers to the Rolling Stones to his current trio. 15 years ago he took the surprise step of bringing David Bowie's guitarist Mick Ronson in just to see how his peculiarly English space-rock influences would affect the songs. Of the current band, guitarist John Jackson and bassist Tony Garnier used to be with American country "swing" band Asleep At The Wheel, while drummer Ian Wallace is an ex-member of English art-rockers King Crimson. Again, he's swishing colours around to see how they work: usually it works.

A Dylan show is always more than a quick Greatest Hits run-through. In the same way his tying folk and protest signalled a rising consciousness in the community, in the way that the Rolling Thunder Revue was a (belated) gesture of hippies working together in the '70s, the current tour shows Dylan signalling a necessary message. Keep true to the good values, don't be misled by MTV/McDonalds' instant junk culture.

DYLAN'S RECENT relevance to teenage and New Youth audiences probably surprises him as much as it does the music biz. Back in 1985, he sat by the pool of a LA hotel and held court, grumbling "the kids are getting a raw deal, nobody's telling them anything through music any more." He turned significantly as Duran Duran's "Hungry Like The Wolf" blasted out of the hotel's PA system and continued "They're getting a lot of consumer products that aren't doing them any good. Sooner or later, they're going to rebel against it all."

When someone suggested his latest album *Empire Burlesque* hardly qualified as a soundtrack for the '80s kid, he grinned, "They don't need to follow me, they have their own people to follow."

For much of the '70s, Dylan's shows and LPs remained irrelevant to what was happening. But around the mid-'80s, *Infidels* and *Empire Burlesque* found him returning to form, recovering his lyrical and musical wit. While the LPs begged his older audience to stop painting him into a corner with all the Legend stuff, he was also working out where he fitted into the new MTV generation.

The fact that a lot of '80s stars — from the acoustic pop of Suzanne Vega, the Go-Betweens and Lloyd Cole to the hardcore protest of Husker Du and Minutemen to even heavy rockers like Bon Jovi and Motley Crue — cited him as an important influence in their music, cast a new light on the man. Those tempted to check him out were bombarded by the publicity surrounding *Biograph* box set, and became hooked.

His Live Aid appearance with Keith and Woody from the Stones was shambolic and under-rehearsed but his throw-away line about taking a million dollars and donating it to struggling American farmers (he had sound problems and didn't even think it'd be heard) swung Neil Young, Willie Nelson and John Mellencamp into action to start Farm Aid. It proved that when Dylan spoke, people listened. In the '80s too, his attempt to make better-sounding records saw him use young talent like Mark Knopfler, disco mixer Arthur Baker and reggae rhythm section Sly & Robbie. He was coaxed into making videos, and 1989's *Mystery* clicked everything into place.

It's doubtful Dylan will cause the same impact in the '90s as he did when he first appeared in the '60s — other folkies were awed, poets acclaimed him as a cultural icon, his songs were so beautiful people cried or claimed their lives changed, he noticed how rock bands took folk songs and brought electricity to folk. He had so many ideas rushing through his head, in a concert once he tried out a new song that ran for 45 minutes, while the original lyric sheet for "Like A Rolling Stone" ran for ten pages! He's pleased he's been picked up by the new generation... but also cautious.

It's one thing to say: There's a new record out and people are responding to the new songs, which is encouraging. But that's not the case. There's no new album and it's hard for me to know just what that means, why people come out and what they are looking for or listening for, maybe the same things I was looking for when I was them.

What Dylan doesn't appreciate, perhaps, is that his songs of injustice, war and love, along with shows that permeate traditional yet positive vibrations, transcend time and space.



Reasons To Be Cheerful

By Stuart Coupe

Tonight Bob Dylan plays the first Melbourne concert of his current Australian tour. He's already played Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra and the performances have been nothing less than controversial. Audience opinion is divided between those who can't stand the sonic onslaught, and those who think they're amongst the finest performances of the Zim's career. One thing's for sure, the times they are a-changin' — and so is Dylan.

Regardless of which side of the fence you fall on after seeing the shows, Dylan remains the most significant and influential living figure in rock music. So, to celebrate his fourth Australian tour, here's a highly opinionated (often irrelevant) selection of lily highlights from his thirty year career — records he made, and records that wouldn't have been made without his influence — plus the odd quote, film, personality, book and silliness.

1. **Blonde On Blonde.** Simply the greatest, most perfect rock n'roll album ever made.
2. **Highway 61 Revisited.** Simply the second greatest, second most perfect rock n'roll album ever made. (Pet Sounds by The Beach Boys is now number three on my list for anyone who's followed my Top 10's over the years!)
3. **Live At The Royal Albert Hall.** A bootleg supposedly recorded live at London's Royal Albert Hall on May 26, 1956, and vies with James Brown Live At The Apollo and Otis Redding Live In Europe for the title of Greatest Live Album Ever Recorded.
4. **Don't Look Back.** Donn Pennebaker's film (now on video) of Dylan in England during 1965 is the pinnacle of rock documentaries. The competition is not great — but this is.
5. **Great White Wonder.** Arguably the first bootleg album, and the beginnings of more than two decades of bootlegged Dylan recordings, these illegal discs often containing better material than on the legitimate releases.
6. **John Wesley Harding.** Dylan's post motorcycle crash album. Subdued, religious, countrified, and totally captivating.
7. **Blood On The Tracks.** Just when 90% of his fans were beginning to suspect that he'd completely lost it, Dylan released his finest album of the 70's.
8. **The Bootleg Series (1961-1991).** Priceless three CD/cassette set that makes some of Dylan's most magnificent performances, previously only available on high price bootlegs, available to everyone at a more than decent price.
9. **Biograph.** For the same reasons as 8.
10. **The Bob Dylan Songbook Played By The Golden Gate Strings.** Magnificent circa '66 album cover, inside, the Golden Gate Strings schmaltzy version of Dylan's early classics. It's in mono and the version of A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall has to be heard to be believed.
11. **Oh Mercy.** Just when you thought it was safe to stop buying Dylan records he reaffirms even the most cynical listener's faith with his best album of the 80's.
12. **"I'd ask him where he got his drugs from".** Dylan's reply to Coupe's question about what he'd ask Hank Williams if he'd had the opportunity to interview him.
13. **Girls From The North Country.** With Johnny Cash from Nashville. Skyline. Two of the most distinctive voices of their generation together.
14. **I Want You.** Dylan's greatest love song, gets my nod from a host of contenders. The only Dylan song, to my knowledge, recorded by Springsteen. (On a bootleg only), Dylan has

repayed the favour by occasionally covering *Dancing In The Dark* on his current *Never-Ending Tour*.

15. **Planet Waves.** Most people reckon this 1974 album with the band sucks. I reckon it's amongst the half dozen finest albums of his career. So there.

16. **Gypsy Fire.** Should be put on a retainer from Dylan's press office — she keeps his name in the papers long after most media has lost interest.

17. **Bob Dylan In Melbourne, Australia.** Bootleg recording of Dylan in Australia during the 1966 tour. Only four acoustic songs, and an out of it Dylan muttering about how his guitar strings keep breaking in Australia.

18. **"He's a weird cat, Bob is".** Brett Whiteley's reaction when rung by Coupe after Dylan had requested a 'hello' message be passed on in an interview conducted before this tour.



Bob Dylan pic by Tony Mott

19. **"Get outta the car Ochs".** Dylan's famous statement to Phil Ochs in the 60's. G.W. McLennan (back when he'd answer to good old Grant) used to wear a T shirt embossed with those lines in the early Go-Betweens days.

20. **Eat The Document.** The legendary doco made by Pennebaker the year after *Don't Look Back* and featuring the newly electrified Zim. Dylan has refused to have it officially released — but video copies circulate amongst the faithful and the curious.

21. **Positively 4th Street.** The most vicious, unrelenting put down in the history of popular music.

22. **The Sports Play Dylan And Donovan.** Kitsch and cool 10" album of classic Dylan (and one Donovan track) a la Sports.

Bob Dylan

Great cover.

23. **Bob Dylan Interpreted — The Sound Symposium.** Not quite as good as 10.

24. **Duane Eddy Plays Dylan.** Better than 23 but still not as classy as 10 — but still featuring some killer guitar playing.

25. **The Basement Tapes.** Bootlegged for years (initially as *Troubled Troubador* and finally legitimately released in 1975). Magnificent performances (so-so recordings) cut in 1967 with the Band in the basement of a house they rented called Big Pink.

26. **Blind Boy Grunt & The Hawks: The Basement Tapes Volume 1.** Double album bootleg. Chosen because it contains more of the sessions on 25.

27. **Blind Boy Grunt & The Hawks: The Basement Tapes Volume 2.** Another double album bootleg containing yet more of 25 and 26. Side three is Tiny Tim (yes, you read it right) singing with the other dudes. This is true. I own it. I am not on drugs. I think they must have been.

28. **Nell Young.** That's what I reckon Dylan is trying to be on this tour — just like Young's incarnation on *Weld*. He's got the volume but, if you ask me, the biggest problem is that Dylan's sound guy doesn't understand the relationship between vocals

and guitars. Nell's guy does.

29. **Before The Flood.** Double album recorded live during the 1974 American tour with the band. Dylan always wanted to come up with something to match Elvis Presley's flamboyant Las Vegas shows and here he does. He also rocks real hard — and you can hear the vocals.

30. **She's Your Lover Now.** Bootlegged for years, and finally released on The Bootleg Series, it's one of Dylan's bitterest lyrics ever.

31. **Tell Me Mama.** On the Live At The Royal Albert Hall album. Simply for the lyrics: 'Your cemetery hips... your graveyard lips'.

32. **'What is this shit'.** The greatest ever one line review of an album — *Great Marcus* on Dylan's *Self Portrait*.

33. **'Don't come back, Bob'.** The greatest ever one line review of a concert — uttered by a guy behind me in Sydney last week after Dylan walked offstage to change a guitar after the fourth song.

34. **Self Portrait.** Most people think this is about as low as Dylan has ever sunk. They obviously decided not to listen to *Let It Be Me*, *Belle Isle*, *Alberta No.1*, *Early Morning Rain*, etc. But yeah, for the most part it ain't great — but like every Dylan album (without exception) it has its moments.

35. **Bob Dylan by Daniel Kramer.** First published in 1967 this is about the best Dylan Book there is — mainly because it's 90% photographs from the early days and doesn't attempt to explain what it all means, maaaa.

36. **Behind The Shades.** Clinton Heylin's recently published biography does attempt to explain what it all means — but does it intelligently, and unlike most other Dylan bios actually recognises that he had a career after the motorcycle accident.

37. **Like A Rolling Stone.** On 45rpm. The greatest single in rock n'roll history. Yep, better, but only by a nudge, than The Ronettes' *Be My Baby*.

38. **Series Of Dreams — Video.** Last track on The Bootleg Series set — and a video, in five minutes and 52 seconds you get the best encapsulated version of Dylan's legacy you could complete in five minutes and 52 seconds. Typically, Dylan told me that he had absolutely nothing to do with its making.

39. **Congratulations.** Recorded with the *Traveling Wilburys*, it has the classic Dylan snarl and 'fuck you' drawl when I thought I'd heard it for the last time years before.

40. **Infidels.** Hyped by the record company at the time as Dylan's best album since *Highway 61*. It isn't but it's still damn fine. Produced by Dire Straits' Mark Knopfler it's Dylan in fine form, especially on *Don't Fall Apart On Me Tonight*.

41. **Grandmaster Flash.** When Springsteen inducted the Zim into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame in 1988 he reckoned that without Dylan's influence *Grandmaster Flash* might not have done The Message.

42. **God Save The Queen.** At the same speech His Bruceless reckons without Bob the Sex Pistols wouldn't have recorded that single.

43. **Pet Sounds.** Bruce reckoned without Bob there wouldn't have been the landmark Beach Boys album.

44. **Sgt Pepper.** Same as 43 for The Beatles.

45. **U2.** According to Bruce they wouldn't have recorded *Pride In The Name Of Love*... or for that matter Marvin Gaye wouldn't have made *What's Goin' On*.

46. **Tarantula.** Dylan's novel. It proved early on that songwriters should stick to songs, and that even Bob can't do everything right.

47. **Tomorrow Is A Long Time.** Released on More Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits and covered by Elvis Presley. The Zim said that he thinks El's reading is the best cover ever done of one of his songs.

48. **Brownsville Girl.** Dylan's one lyrical collaboration with Sam Shepherd. Eleven minutes long, it saves *Knocked Out Loaded* one of his most listless albums of the 80's.

49. **Wiggle, Wiggle.** From Dylan's last studio album, *Under The Red Sky*. Something is happening here Bob, but we don't know what it is — although we have our suspicions.

50. **The Never-Ending Tour.** The shows are certainly erratic, but he's entered that whilst the tour keeps going he'll be a regular visitor to Australia.

● When Peter Wells went to see Bob Dylan play the Sydney Festival Hall in the '60s, he was so excited he leaped atop one of the speakers — and was rudely told to get off, by Dylan's manager Albert Grossman. But this month, no one's gonna tell Wells to get off the stage at El Dyl's Sydney shows, he's the support act.

The shows will see Wells preview songs from his new album *The Meaning Of Life*. It's based on a Tibetan mantra, whose symbol was lifted by a Honolulu tattooist in the late '30s as one of his designs for US servicemen. The story is that every single one of the servicemen who got that tattoo survived the war.

★ FROM the celebrity roadie files... Cleopatra Wong, featuring former Go Betweens Lindy Morrison and Amanda Brown, certainly have some talent in their crew.

Currently doing support shows for Bob Dylan, Lindy put the call out for an extra equipment lugger for the State Theatre spots.

Died Pretty guitarist Brett Myers was more than happy to lend his considerable muscle to the task.

Besides being a mate of the Wongs, he had left it too late to get a ticket to the Dylan show and was desperate to check out the gig.

Mr Tambourine Man Revisited

Like his seemingly endless back catalogue, there will always be mileage in Bob Dylan literature. Flic Everett spoke to John Bauldie, editor of a new volume of Dylanography.

I suppose I'm too young to attach so much importance to Bob Dylan. That prerogative belongs to my parents generation, who can talk about peace rallies and the Isle of Wight with more than pseud nostalgia of a time before they were born. By the time I was old enough to buy records with any degree of cred, he was churning out such born-again epics as *Saved*, and had left behind the inspirational ambition of *Highway 61*, or *Blonde on Blonde*. But these, with *Blood on the Tracks* and the rest of the pre '78 catalogue, were played in our house through all my childhood. No wonder then, that I read *Wanted Man - In Search of Bob Dylan* with interest, gripped but unwilling to discover the human frailties of the man. It's editor, John Bauldie, is also editor of the *Telegraph*, the magazine for Dylanologists, and the book's interviews are drawn largely from its pages. Why Dylan, though? Why not Springsteen, or Jagger? What is it about this beak-nosed guy 'with a voice like sand and glue' that inspires such adulation?

"When I first got interested in Dylan in 1964, it was the literacy of the lyrics as much as the sound he was making... I was listening to a lot of blues music, and then along came Dylan whose songs had the same effect as some of the poetry I'd been reading as well"

Even so, reading the *Telegraph*, one could be

and thriving (3 times a year) is evidence of the fact that there's a lot to say - he's got longevity, he's an artist" (he don't look back). "You don't stop saying things about Keats, do you?". Er, no.

Moving onto my own preferences I ask him about the rather distressing turn of musical events after Dylan got religion; Does Bauldie feel that the best has long gone? "The live album with *The Dead* was the worst ... but *Under the Red Sky* (1990) is one of my favourites. You can never write him off - he's always going to come up with something interesting, and I think the people who say he's burnt out aren't fully aware of what he's doing. You can't compare the past with the present"

Isn't all this talk about music avoiding the issue for the thirty and forty somethings of the Dylan era? Those who actually sang 'I Shall Be Released' and 'Blowin' in the Wind' and actually believed the lyrics... didn't Dylan change the World?

"It's a bold claim to make about anybody", demurs Bauldie, "but he was part of a time in which there were great shifts of social consciousness - and he was the most important voice of that time, because he combined politics and morals. He was a very influential part of things, reflecting what was happening. What was in the wind."

From the conversation so far, it appears that actually meeting Dylan must have been the zenith of Bauldie's career... in the foreword of *Wanted Man* there is a description of the momentous occasion. The circumstances were no 'Fan Backstage' embarrassment, but lucky chance. "It was a show in Hartford, Connecticut

Isn't all this talk about music avoiding the issue for the thirty and forty somethings of the Dylan era?

forgiven for thinking that Dylan is being deified to mythical proportions, and perhaps the wood is becoming a little obscured by the trees.. Bauldie disagrees: "I think it is very much to his credit that he has survived as well as he has done, given the kind of focus of attention that has been placed on him. What other rock stars have fans that have been so fervently in pursuit of him that they raid his dustbins? And then there's the way he shut himself away and didn't play shows, but recently he's attempted to destroy the myth by making himself more accessible."

"This idea about him not talking to the press - well, he doesn't talk to everyone, but there's been a couple of big interviews with him over the last two months. When someone said he was reclusive, he said 'I'm not reclusive - I'm exclusive...' I'm beginning to get the impression that I'm talking to one of Bob Dylan's PR people - present the smallest criticism and you get stone walled. Mind you, with fans like Bauldie, he don't need no PR."

I suggest that it's all been said, perhaps he should be left alone at last to get on with being reclusive or exclusive or riding on a mail train, or whatever. "I don't think it has all been said, and the fact that the *Telegraph* is up and running

- we were just walking back to our car, and we recognised Dylan's shuttlebus. He jumped out, and he must have been aware that people were gonna talk to him. He can't have anticipated he'd find himself next to the guy who edits the fan magazine from England. Me and the guy I was with took Dylan's arm and rolled on down the road.. He was really responding to a lot of the things I said about the *Telegraph*. He was very funny."

Surely then the one thing that would put the leopard skin pillbox hat on the whole thing would be an interview with Dylan himself, after all this time?

"I dunno" says Bauldie, surprisingly, "The sort of interview I'd want to do would have to be very long, very exhaustive... and sometimes I think maybe I don't want to do that. It doesn't really bother me, he's so evasive in interviews. I think you learn more about him by talking to the people who've worked with him. I think it works in a way that having Dylan's own voice probably wouldn't."

Reading through *Wanted Man*, I think he may be right.

Wanted Man - In Search of Bob Dylan edited by John Bauldie, is available in Penguin paperback (£6.99).

So good to have Bob on our side

BOB Dylan and his band signalled their intentions from the first chords — to play fast, loose and loud — and their opener, *Maggie's Farm*, sent shock waves through the crowd.

The swirling, chaotic version was full of '60s psychedelia and '80s head-banging and the band stayed in this mode for most of the night.

It was eerie seeing Dylan (slim and self-contained) recreate the '60s feel of electric experimentation while radically changing his songs into utterly contemporary things.

Once again he demonstrated that even his best-known songs can be remade into entirely different musical forms without losing any of their lyrical force, and the challenge to the audience was exhilarating.

This was a rock 'n' roll concert, with the band (Billy Baxter and John Jackson on guitars, Ian Wallace on drums and Tony Garnier on bass) sometimes loose to the point of dislocation but able to snap back lightly for delicate work, especially with pedal-steel.

Dylan has often been criticised for his choice of band,

Rock

Bob Dylan
Perth Entertainment Centre

C.J. ANDERSON

but he's spotted an audience need for real music, however wild or ragged, after a long diet of slick, polite bands which play live CDs, and this latest outfit was perfect.

Since the music was the main point of the concert, the stage was plain, no backdrop exotic light show, just the players and their gear.

After some rambling and gloriously noisy versions of *All along the Watchtower*, *Simple Twist of Fate*, *I Remember You*, and *Lay Lady Lay*, Dylan switched to solo acoustic and delivered an eccentric, high-speed *Mr Tambourine Man*.

Some people laughed, some listened in fascination to the voice which has become so exaggerated it's almost a self-parody, but everybody responded with enthusiasm and he continued in this vein for *Gates of Eden* and *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*.

With the band back, an almost unrecognisable *It Ain't Me, Babe* turned into a wonderful brisk strumming session with guitars, double bass and mandolin.

Then came thundering R&B, some rockabilly and headbanging (seriously) wrapped around both older songs and new material from *Under a Red Sky*. Dylan then yelled his way down *Highway 61* and bowed himself off stage.

It was a Dylan rejuvenated, a man still in love with his music, and the extraordinary reworkings of his songs were powered by a steady, sure energy.

The encore was an ominous, majestic *Ballad of a Thin Man* and an anthemic *Rainy Day Women No 12 and 35*, and Dylan and the band stretched out. A baby-boomer in the front row could no longer contain himself and leapt to his feet to dance. Dylan saw him ... and smiled! Our evening was complete.

The song-list will probably change completely by the next concert but the sheer energy was a wonderful surprise and if anybody has a bootleg could I have a copy please?

Inspired chaos from Dylan

By NOEL MENGEL

NEVER expect the expected from Bob Dylan. The build-up to his Brisbane Entertainment Centre show on Saturday night should have been warning enough.

A small line of amps and drum kit sat in the centre of the vast stage (about enough gear for your average pub gig), with a solitary row of lights above (not quite enough for your average pub gig). Not even any taped music to build the atmosphere.

Then he was on, straight into *All Along The Watchtower*, backed by that anonymous, youngish band which blasted cardrums at the Grammys last year.

What was to come was much like the man's career. Occasionally dull, sometimes cryptic, sometimes



Concert review

messy to the point you wondered if the band was going to make it to the end of the song, but often inspired to an intensity rarely achieved in live performance.

The sound varied from passable to abysmal, the drums cracked with all the fire of a cardboard box under a blanket, but thankfully, the lap steel guitar which provided most of the color was clear, and the acoustic guitar sound was fine.

The man himself looked fit, even

youthful (A *Bringing It All Back Home*-era haircut helped).

The set mostly focused on '60s material (*Maggie's Farm* and *Ballad of a Thin Man* among them), and a later song like *Tangled Up In Blue*, for instance, was irreverently converted into a swampy shuffle.

The show ignited with a slow, passionate version of *Simple Twist Of Fate*, and even *The Times They Are A Changing* had fresh life, with acoustic guitars, mandolin and stand-up bass.

The clincher was *Highway 61 Revisited*, delivered as a pounding rocker, a powerful reminder that Dylan is primarily a brilliant rock musician.

The chaotic sound had you on the edge of the seat, concentrating, but many aficionados would have gone home believing they had seen something special. They were right.



BOB Dylan ... something special

Bob Dylan

Venue:

Perth Entertainment Centre

Like those great rock icons such as Costello, Young and Reed, Bob Dylan has an almost pathological disinterest in giving his audience what it wants — a slick reassuring run-through of Greatest Hits and a copy reflection of what the crowd's adulation was all about. On his past Australian tours, Dylan's almost been confrontational about meeting any expectations. As an artist, he feels he has every right to give the show he wants.

The Perth gig, which kicked off his 1992 Australian tour, was something else altogether. Ambling out in leather jacket, black boots and polka dot shirt, he looked trim and eager. Kicking off with "Maggie's Farm", "Lay Lady Lay" and "All Along The Watchtower" it was clear there was no confrontation. Rather, as the blues-boogie feel of "Maggie's Farm" proved, he was merely re-inventing the songs, occasionally seeming to make up changes as he went. "Watching The River Flow" was spontaneously slotted into the set, after a few seconds consultation with his band. It was shamolic but at the same time chillingly passionate. By digging around for new meaning in the bones of his huge array of songs, Dylan seemed to enjoy the new perspective he was giving. Most times they worked, mostly furious, sparking and chilling. Occasionally, as on "When I Paint My Masterpiece", it was shamolic.

Naturally such an approach meant the band had to be constantly on its toes. On past tours, Dylan has managed to pick the right guitarists to give his songs the right sense of drama — from the incomparable Robbie Robertson to Mick Ronson to Tom Petty/Mike Campbell to GE Smith from 1989. This time around the five-piece band is guitar-driven by John Jackson: the band was set up as nothing more than a bar-room band, but during "Watchtower" and Hendrix's "Dolly Dagger", Jackson burst forth with some inspired Hendrix-influenced shots. William Baxter's lap steel was another wonderful counterpoint to Dylan's love eccentricities in "Simple Twist Of Fate". Bob's voice cleaving through the air with eternal desperation through a



spinning wheel of rhymes while the band lurked at the edges, catapulting through some astonishing changes. Wonderful stuff.

In a recent *Juke* front cover preview of the show from America, it was pointed out that the bulk of Dylan's audience were teenagers, newly converted, who didn't view him so much as "the voice of a generation" as older Dylan followers did, but as an inspired if grubby looking singer/songwriter. It was the younger set who seemed most confused as to what Dylan was doing in his live show. It was they who cheered the most when the "acceptable" Dylan appeared, solo acoustic on "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Gates Of Eden", or when he and the band continued in the acoustic vein during "The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll" about a black servant who was caned to death and his archetypal love-ain't-that-groovy-and-forever "It Ain't Me Babe" (both old songs which had not lost an iota of anger and sarcasm through the course of the years). They were the ones who became bored during the electrical stretch with his late '80s/early '90s material ("Cat's In The Hat") and re-vamped "Highway 61" who

were bewildered at the way Dylan hardly looked at them (one sentence to the masses — "thank you everybody", and that at the end of the 90 minute set!) and booed at the end.

Dylan and band returned for one encore — "Ballad Of A Thin Man" which weighed with collective intensity, and "Rainy Day Women No. 12 & 35" which rattled the Entertainment Centre to its very foundations. As far as Dylan was concerned, if you wanted the Greatest Hits done in just the way they came over on radio, go out and buy the record. But if you're willing to go on a voyage of discovery to find new ways to get into the soul of a song, with Dylan as Captain, then you got something out of it. Some aspects of the show were stunning in their delivery, simply because they were improvised, and they *lived*. As ever, Dylan's concerts left the crowd divided: some booed and left disappointed, angry, muttering "rip off". Others hailed it as the best concert they'd ever been to, because it left them on a high for days after. For me, Dylan was rejuvenated, ragged but glorious, a master of his art. Unforgettable, unsurpassable.

— DOUG KESSELING

Dylan's times: they keep on a-changing

CONCERT

Bob Dylan (Palais, Wednesday, again 3.5.67 April)

SUZY FREEMAN-GREENE

UNDER red lights, Bob Dylan and his band let fly with "All along the Watchtower". It seemed the audience could hardly believe he was there.

He stood on stage with knees bent inwards and head bowed, a thin man in black with his harmonica a shining talisman around his neck. There was no backing singer, no piano, no repartee.

Ninety minutes and two encores later — after Dylan's strange, brilliant re-worked version of "Blowin' in the Wind" and a final tentative wave — there was still an element of disbelief in the air. People were stirred; old wounds stung again but no one quite believed the night was over.

It was probably not what they had expected. An almost unrecognisable version of "Just like a Woman" had a completely new melody and tempo. There were surprising renditions of "Tangled up in Blue" and "Little Moses", a track Dylan rehearsed but never played for his 1975 American tour. Some, no doubt, were hungry for the great unsung songs that were as much about their own lives as his.

There was something fragile about the Dylan we witnessed at this intimate venue. At first he fumbled in awkward silence for his harmonica; slurred his words and delivered some ill-timed acoustic flourishes at the end of songs.

But he is a deliberately perverse man, who is constantly reinventing himself and finds gold and mud in the unpredictable.

The evening was fairly representative of his 30-year career although how you begin to express a lifetime's work in less than two hours, I don't really know.

He was accompanied by guitarists William Baxter and John Jackson, bassist Anthony Garnier and drummer Ian Wallace. Two segments of lean, unrelenting rock and roll were separated by a delicate, moving acoustic set. Thankfully Dylan's voice became clearer as he went from "Little Moses" to "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" to the sullen "It Ain't Me Babe". His harmonica echoed his voice with its own scratchy lament.

As the ending of "Simple Twist of Fate" hung in the air, one fan convinced of his bonds with the great man yelled out, "Festival Hall, '66, Bob..."

As if on cue, Dylan lurched into "The Times They Are A-Changing", accompanied by acoustic guitars, double bass and mandolin. From there we were nailed to our seats by a raw delivery of "Highway 61 Revisited".

After an odd, shaky bow, Dylan returned with "Ballad of a Thin Man" and sang two more tracks before ending with "Blowin' in the Wind", a song that is even sadder in its continued relevance to the times.

The final impression was of a man uncompromising in his vision as he journeys on this brave, flawed, "never-ending tour".

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ARTS

EDITED BY RON BANKS

Times are a-changin' too much for Dylan

CONCERT

BOB DYLAN

Entertainment Centre

Reviewed by RON BANKS

AFTER the depressing experience of the Bob Dylan concert I went home and pulled out a couple of his scratchy old albums from the bottom of the pile and put them on the turntable.

I needed reassurance that the folk poet of the 60s, the anti-war crusader of my youth, the folk anti-hero for a generation of Baby Boomers still existed.

That the real Bob Dylan was pinned down on vinyl if not in the flesh; and that the black speck in the distance on the remote, passionless stage of the Entertainment Centre was not the real Bob Dylan.

A few random tracks from *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* and *Highway 61 Revisited*, records so old they can be played in mono only, soon convinced me there are, in fact, two Bob Dylans.

There is the Dylan of the collective conscience of the 60s generation, those who grew up with the music of the young man described on the sleeve of *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* as "our finest contemporary song writer".

Then there is Dylan the performer circa 1992 — a humourless purveyor of pub rock blues with virtually none of the flashes of wit and spontaneity of his youth.

Sure, we all grow old. But do we have to grow old so churlishly as Dylan? He doesn't speak to the audience, he crouches low over the microphone and then drowns in distorted waves of sound from his over-loud backing musicians.



Bob Dylan: the vinyl version is better.

Dylan has always been the anti-hero — the young man whose nasal whine was a substitute for singing, whose harmonica playing rarely reached beyond the inept. Yet his individualism, his ability to strip the folk and rock traditions back to the essentials, turned him into a cultural icon.

But Dylan the anti-hero has become Dylan the anti-performer; someone with a total disregard for the audience's

desire to be pleased and stroked. One doesn't expect the saccharine sentimentality of Diana Ross's relationship with the audience, but it's nice to feel that the performer does recognise we're out there in the dark.

If this perfunctory performing style is hyped up as the mystique of the true, individual artist, then take your guitar and shove it.

Even the advertising for this performance distorted the truth:

we were told Dylan would play an electric and an acoustic set. Visions of vintage Dylan, folk guitar in hand and harmonica in mouth, flashed through the minds of those old enough to buy his albums when they first came out.

Sadly, the acoustic set hardly happened — a couple of solo numbers on steel-string amplified guitar flashed by and that was it, back to the booming pub rock set.

Dylan did play a few numbers from the early years, most barely recognisable through the heavy rock re-interpretation.

Lay Lady Lay, for example boomed its distinctive choruses to the back of the vast auditorium but drowned the lyrics in a mush of guitar and drum distortion.

My companion, another ageing Baby Boomer with a fondness for early Dylan, swore she recognised *Highway 61 Revisited* among the crash of sound, wasn't so sure. After a while, the murky slurry of sound had transmuted everything into a same old dross.

It is an interesting social phenomenon that the crowd for a modern Dylan concert is mainly those who were children — or not even born — when Dylan was first making an impact. Presumably, Dylan's fame as a musical innovator of the 60s has drawn them there. Surely I couldn't have been his current concert standard.

Well, I hope the younger fans enjoyed it. For this Baby Boomer, and I suspect the small knot of early Dylanites in attendance, it was a crushing disappointment.

Another dream lies broken in the dust. Best forget the nostalgia trip, eh?

The cowboy angel rides again

AT the age of 50 he is arguably the most significant rock musician of the last 30 years. With 21 certified Gold albums, the writer of some of the best known songs of the last century is, by any assessment, phenomenally wealthy and has no need to be on the road.

So why has Bob Dylan spent the last four years subjecting himself to the most punishing touring schedule of his entire career? Why, in most cases, does he insist on playing multiple nights at small venues instead of playing to the same number of people in one night at a large theatre? For the latter we should be thankful, whilst the former raises interesting questions about Dylan's motivations.

Since June 1988 Dylan has played an average 125 concerts per year on what even he is now referring to as The Never-Ending Tour. Along with constant touring throughout North America he's traversed the planet, playing in many countries for the first time in his career. There have been concerts in such diverse locations as Iceland, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Greece, Turkey, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

Finally the Never-Ending Tour has found its way to Australia. It's Dylan's fourth visit to this country. In 1966 he toured at the peak of his encounter with electric rock'n'roll, returning in 1978 with a Las Vegas style cabaret routine notable for little besides its blandness and Dylan's fixation with face make-up. In 1986 he joined forces with Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers for an equally dismal series of concerts.

This time he arrives with a stripped down band, dividing the concert between electric band performances and acoustic renditions. If overseas set lists are any indication it's a Greatest Hits style show featuring as many of his famous songs as any fan could reasonably expect to hear in two hours, plus a smattering of material from recent albums like the critically acclaimed *Oh Mercy* and the far less enthusiastically received *Under The Red Sky*.

Yes he'll probably play *Like A Rolling Stone*, *Mr Tambourine Man*, *Blowin' In The Wind*, *Lay Lady Lay*, *I Shall Be Released*, *All Along The Watchtower* and *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. And if the tapes I've heard (circulating among Dylanophiles) are any indication he's still a hit and miss proposition - but when he's on, the performances are as fiery and passionate as anything he's done onstage in many a year.

"My old songs are always interesting to me," replies a slightly defensive Dylan on the telephone from Los Angeles just prior to his departure for Australia. I'd just suggested to him that playing so many of his older songs might get just a little boring for him.



Bob Dylan: Greatest hits show

This is my second encounter with Dylan. In 1986 I 'interviewed' him after a concert in Auckland. The conversation lasted a good seven and a half minutes and it was obvious that Dylan had absolutely no interest in talking to the media. He sidestepped any specific questions in much the same way as he toyed with journalists in the mid 60's. His only straight answer was to a question about the legendary American country singer, Hank Williams who Dylan had said in a previous interview he would have liked to meet. Williams died in the early 1950s.

"What would you ask him if he was sitting here now," I asked. Dylan leaned across the table and said, "I'd wanna know where he got his drugs from."

Dylan's aversion to being interviewed is part of rock legend. Before his encounter I'm told not to ask any questions about the old days, not to bring up Joan Baez or ask him what the 14th line of *Desolation Row* really means. It's better, comes the instruction, if I keep my questions to the last year, and don't come across like a Dylan expert or fan. Dylan likes "straight media".

This time the man's in fine form. He laughs every so often and at least attempts to deal with each question. Dylan is not a great conversationalist. Every answer is punctuated by mutterings, sniffing, and pauses that seem to go on forever. An interview with Dylan is rarely anything but a series of frustrating attempts to get coherent answers. Dylan is at least relatively expansive on the subject of the Never-Ending Tour which he says wasn't started with the intention that it would continue for so many years. "No, this is just my pattern over the last three or four years, to play at least 100 times a year, maybe a little bit more, maybe a little bit less," Dylan says. "It just works out better for me because it's not necessary to be looking for a band all the time. That's the advantage of just going out to play. If you're only going out once in a while then, you know, you have a problem trying to find a band and trying to find people who aren't playing with

somebody else at that time, and it's...in the long run it's better to just go out and do the shows and either it's happening or it's not."

It's a reasonable leap of faith to take that on face value - to accept that someone of Dylan's stature has played around 500 shows in the last four years merely because he's worried that his band members might go off and play with someone else. Maybe he's taking the travelling troubadour caper to extremes. Maybe he genuinely does need the adoration. Certainly there's other things he could be doing.

Of all the new countries Dylan has visited during the Never-Ending tour it's Argentina and Brazil that he's the most expansive about.

"Yeah, Argentina, ah, ah, ah, you know, it's really dusty down there, but Brazil was the same two times in a row," he says.

"It's okay. It's a different scene. You never know really...it's kind of like makeshift sound almost. You're never really sure about the facilities you're playing in, and what can be heard because everything looks so funky but, ah...ah...ah...the people were very responsive and it was relaxing being down there."

One of the most significant experiences for Dylan over the past four years of touring was visiting the site of the concentration camp at Dachau.

"No-one had ever taken me to one before, and someone took me to one, yeah, last time we were in Germany someone took me to one of them concentration camps," Dylan says.

"It's a pretty spooky place."

A moving experience?

"Well you can't help but be moved by seeing all the regalia they have in there. It looked pretty much like whatever they were supposed to look like. Monuments you know, monuments of death. That's what they were."

The last year has seen the usual accolades heaped on Dylan. *Life Magazine* listed him as one of "The 100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Century." The

National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences awarded him the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammy Awards, and most significantly for Dylan, the French government recognised his contributions with their highest cultural honour, *Commandeur de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, which has only been awarded to 35 individuals since the Revolution (Chevalier, Chaplin, and very few Americans). The Minister of Culture and Communications decorated Dylan during the course of a five night engagement at Le Grand Rex in Paris. This was obviously one award that Dylan took extremely seriously.

"Oh yeah," he says. "That was a heavy thing, being given an award by a French government, especially in the area of creativity, you know, because of the French influence in my own stuff."

Questioned about why he plays smaller venues in preference to larger auditoriums he's equally offhanded.

"The sound is easier to control, and it's not so much of a circus," he says.

So does Dylan still enjoy the grind of touring? Doesn't there come a point when he'd prefer to get back home for an extended period?

"There comes a point for everything, but...ah, you know...playing music's a full time job you know," he mutters. "It's hard to shut it off and turn it off and on like a faucet."

Possibly that's the (unlikely) key to it all - that it remains in his blood and he feels as though he doesn't have a choice. That doesn't however explain Dylan's extended period away from touring, some breaks, punctuated by occasional performances, lasting as long as seven years.

In his excellent biography of Dylan, *Behind The Shades*, Clinton Heylin suggests that this is one of only three periods in his career when Dylan has combined frequent studio activity with prodigious bouts of touring. All have coincided with periods of turmoil in Dylan's personal life, almost as if the road becomes an easy escape from the issues he must face head-on in life away from the road.

If that's the case with the Never-Ending Tour Dylan certainly isn't saying anything.

Questions about his personal life are strictly off-limits. A strong air of paranoia surrounds most of his activities. In a 1990 interview he explained his dislike of being photographed: "It rubs me the wrong way, a camera. It doesn't matter who it is, someone in my own family could be pointing a camera around. It's a frightening feeling...Cameras make ghosts out of people."

At recent concerts Dylan has refused to allow photographers in the theatres, and made things even more difficult by shrouding himself in darkness for most of the concert. It has been reported that these days Dylan is rarely seen by members of his band or crew. He travels in his own bus, away from the musicians, and often stays at different hotels. His appearance at soundchecks are rare and he often doesn't turn up for rehearsals. Agreeing to sign an autograph for a fan is extremely unusual.

Dylan also doesn't like his concerts being recorded and tapes circulated. During the Never-Ending Tour he's been known to throw in covers of songs as diverse as Bruce Springsteen's *Dancing In The Dark*, and Townies Van Zandt's *Ponchy And Lefty*.

"Where did you hear that if you don't mind me asking?" says a suddenly serious Dylan.

Told that I haven't actually heard the tapes, but have read they're occasional inclusions, he sounds relaxed.

Whilst the Dylan industry rolls on around him with a regular stream of biographies and critical studies appearing on the market, Dylan at least feigns disinterest.

"Not really," he replies when asked if he bothers to look at any of the books and find out what people are saying about him and his work.

"No. It seems like they come out pretty regular now (laughs). It's it's...ah...it's ah...they really don't...it doesn't knock me out to read a book about myself, you know."

There's other books to read?

"Yeah, yeah, exactly."

So what has Dylan been reading of late?

"My, ah, my latest book...it's been out for a long time, but my latest thing of just reading was back into reading the William Blake poems again," Dylan says.

"It seems like when you're young and you read 'em they don't have the effect on you that they do when you get older. It was years ago when it was time just to read all those guys, but lately it's been necessary for me to find some time to go back and re-read someone like Blake or Shelley, Byron, some of those people."

Aside from his reading Dylan spends much of his time on the road painting and drawing. He explains that Random House has a book of his drawings coming out later this year, the majority of it being his output from the last three years.

In keeping with his current workaholic state Dylan is also preparing to record another album. He says that half the songs are written, they're more acoustically based than recent albums, and he expects to record in Chicago soon after the Australian tour.

Does Dylan find that the songs come easier as he gets older or is it more difficult to find new things that he wants to say? Certainly songs like *Wiggle Wiggle* ("Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle 'til the moon is blue/ wiggle 'til the moon sees you", etc) from his last album weren't exactly highpoints of his songwriting career.

"Well they're coming natural if they come at all," he says, laughing loudly.

"So...um...when it's not coming...ah...ah, there's really no inclination on my part to make it happen."

Dylan's apparent jovial mood suggest that maybe it's time to throw in the inevitable question about Gypsy Fire, the woman who's been consistently in the media over recent years because of her (successful) action against *The Truth* newspaper over allegations that she was Dylan's sex slave during the 1986 tour.

"Oh yeah, is she still around?" Dylan chuckles.

After being told that Fire is planning to write a book about their time together and the court case, Dylan sighs.

"Ooooh, poor girl, you know."

Then out of the blue Dylan says, "Hey listen, you can say hi to that guy Brett Whiteley...is he still around there painting? He gave me some drawings the last time there and they still look good to me."

A couple of hours later I call Whiteley to pass on the message.

"He's a weird cat, Bob is," Whiteley says.

Couldn't have put it better myself.

Stuart Coupe

Bob Dylan's blues No. 27

BOB Dylan ruined my life. He doesn't know that - but he might know that there are thousands like me left wounded by his words.

I thought I could be a writer until I heard *Gates Of Eden* and all hope died in that seven minutes of utter despair that forced me and all those other 17-year-olds to face the truth. We could never be good enough.

It happened in 1965. Having stumbled across a copy of the *Freewheelin'* album at a friend's house (he was later to buy *Nashville Skyline* for the sole purpose of defacing and then destroying that "betrayal"), I was hooked. That led to an exploration that became an odyssey.

Dylan's first album - mainly blues standards - led to an abiding interest in the music of Leadbelly, Muddy Waters, Big Bill Broonzy, Sonny Terry, Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker and many more. But it was that fateful *Times They Are a'Changin'* album that altered my world forever.

The odyssey had begun and the albums still stand as landmarks on that journey. There have been dizzy highs and gut-wrenching lows - *Highway 61 Revisited* (high); *Nashville Skyline* (low);

Blood On The Tracks (sky high); *The Isle of Wight Festival* (half way to Hell). There was that purple period with *The Band* and those dismal live gigs in Australia six years ago. There was *Desire*, there was *Street Legal* and there were still more live disasters. But it's the images that continue to haunt and taunt - those instruments of torture that drive all before them. If for nothing else, he'll be remembered for all those breathtaking lines that echo down the years.

Then, as abruptly as it began, the roller coaster stopped. *Slow Train Comin'* wasn't a bad album musically. But for reasons that remain a mystery it marked the end of the line. It wasn't the religion or the extreme right wing politics (though these were bad enough) or even the mawkish patriotism that did it. But the spell was broken.

As the man himself said in Sydney in 1986: "I'm a man with a great future behind me."

Could Robert Zimmerman have had a glimpse of that future when he adopted the name of his poet hero? Dylan Thomas had written his best work before he was 30 and spent his remaining years - his own Never-Ending Tour? - in search of his former glory. At least the more modern poet has avoided the pit of drug dependence.

Nevertheless, poets shouldn't die of old age; they owe it to us to burn out like some supernova in a darkened sky leaving only the memory of a very bright light. By surviving to age 50, rich and comfortable, the man who influenced everybody from Leonard Cohen to The Sex Pistols has cheated his public of that very spectacle. Maybe that's what broke the spell.

Anyway, I for one won't be there when he hits the stage at Boondall. The guy's done me enough harm as it is.

Russell Hunter

Prize time

We have a copy of Bob Dylan's three CD set, *The Bootleg Series: To score the set, tell us who wrote the liner notes to Nashville Skyline*. Write your answer on the back of an envelope and send it to The Dylan Comp., Time Off, PO Box 515, Brisbane 4001. Winner announced next week.

Bob Dylan is considering the symbolism of the '60s voice of youth turning 50 last year. "Well, Rod's around," he says. "He must be close to me or even above me. (Rod Stewart is 47). A couple of 'em are around. The Stones."

What does he think of the Stones 30 years later? Dylan breaks up laughing. "If you like that sort of thing."

Bob Dylan: sit-down comic?

The man who has been called one of this century's most influential — and possibly earnest — figures is not expansive, but he's not walking out of the interview after seven minutes either, as he did to one journalist.

This is a kinder, gentler Dylan, cooling off after his first Melbourne show on Wednesday night.

Dylan is a small man, almost curled up in his chair. His shoulders are hunched against intrusion.

He offers a limp hand and a grunt in greeting. This is Dylan in a good mood.

Why Dylan has agreed to meet a journalist after refusing 300 requests for interviews when he turned 50 in May last year is unclear.

But I was the beneficiary of half an hour of sometimes incomprehensible, sometimes lucid thoughts, punctuated by three or four belly laughs.

America's greatest living poet is actually being charming.

Since he became famous in the coffee shops of New York's Greenwich Village in 1961, Dylan has embodied other people's dreams and ideals of the '60s.

"People seem now to have forgotten about it," he says.

"People are now more or less interested in the '90s. Sixties memories are fading a little."

There seems to be a '60s revival every few months.

Dylan smiles. "There were '60s revivals in the '60s."

When journalists are finally allowed to touch the hem, they are usually forewarned not to get personal.

"There's nothing that is really very interesting about me," Dylan protests, laughing. "Talking about me doesn't make a conversation more interesting. It doesn't interest me to talk about me. It's my least favourite subject (laughs again)."

But Dylan seems happy enough when asked about his children Anna, 25, and Jacob, 21, who, with Sara Dylan, were immortalised in the song Sara from his acclaimed 1975 album *Desire*.

"They're just around. I have an extended family, this, that and the other. We get on well, for the most part."

After 30 years of singing *Blowin' In The Wind*, does he perform the early songs under duress?

"I do those songs because they feel right to sing," he says. "Even if they weren't my songs, they're my style of song, and they are oriented to what I'm doing today."

He is tired of interpreting his early songs too literally.

Dylan music right for Bob



• The Bob Dylan of the early '70s.

"Some of my records I've been overloaded with, some parts and arrangements," he admits.

"Whereas the song itself still has its strength for me. With some of the older songs, the vision is still quite focused."

Strangely, he admits to changing the list of songs he performs to keep certain fans happy.

"There are a lot of people that come to our shows lots of times, so just for them, it's a good idea to do different things. It's not like they come and see me once."

Dylan has recently been the subject of a biography, Clinton Heylin's *Behind The Shades*, and there are several retrospectives, including a three-CD boxed set of

"bootlegged" versions of his earliest songs.

"Well, you know, people bootleg concerts, they might as well be out legally. Nobody would ever have thought that was that big a business. They sell quite a bit."

Was there any music Dylan admires today? "No. Nothing."

He believes music lost the plot. "There was a cut-off point sometime." The early '70s? "Maybe. When the machines got into making music, you could turn it off more. It seemed to take a different turn at that point and the purpose got kind of lost."

The audience at Dylan's shows consists largely of people who were in nappies when he released *All Along The Watchtower* in 1968.

• Bob Dylan ... America's greatest living poet.

"I'm lucky to have any audience," Dylan says.

"A lot of my contemporaries really don't have any."

His views on Australia are a little disjointed, but he claims to be fascinated by a country so different from his own.

"To me Australia is ancient ground broken off from Africa, and that's why there are different animals here."

"Someone told me kangaroos are prehistoric. The people who are indigenous are prehistoric, too."

"Just looking at the ground ... it doesn't look this way in America or Europe. This is ancient territory. For that reason alone, it's worth spending time here."

Dylan said recently that he'd written enough songs. "My songs aren't written like they used to be, which was all the time. They come slower now (laughs)."

Dylan ties a towel around his head and walks out of the dressing room and disappears into his tour bus. To rejuvenate himself, he sometimes decides to escape from the circus.

"Oh, I get away to the boondocks somewhere."

■ Reserved seats tickets for Bob Dylan's Launceston concert are available for \$41.50 from Centertainment, the Silverdome and Redline Coaches North-West depots.

Legend keeps the times a changin'

Like the times Bob Dylan keeps a changin' — and rarely has that been more obvious than during the first concerts of Dylan's current Australian tour a few weeks ago.

Throughout his 36-year career Dylan has rarely stood still for long, preferring to constantly challenge his audiences to either follow him or fall behind.

The audience and critical reaction to this incarnation of Dylan already rivals the outcry and controversy that surrounded his move in the early and mid-'60s from acoustic folk music to full-blown rock'n'roll.

While this tour is being promoted as a mixture of electric rock'n'roll

and acoustic performances, it's more than three quarters loud, tough rock'n'roll. Blink and you might miss the few acoustic moments.

Dylan is certainly presenting a cross section of highlights from his career — but it's anyone's guess which highlights he'll perform on any given night.

On his first night in Sydney he performed 10 different songs to the ones that made up his 15-song opening night performance in Perth. Still, Dylan would have to do a week of shows in Launceston to play everything that people wanted to hear.

Last Monday in Sydney he treated

STUART COUPE, a former Tasmanian now living and writing in NSW, went to one of Bob Dylan's concerts in Sydney. Here is his review...

the audience to such classics as *Desolation Row*, *The Times They Are A Changin'*, *Just Like A Woman*, *Blowin' In The Wind*, *Ballad Of A Thin Man*, *Highway 61 Revisited*, *All Along The Watchtower* and *Maggie's Farm*.

So why the controversy?

This is confrontational rock'n'roll with Dylan often radically

reinterpreting these older songs, sometimes to the point where it takes even the most obsessive Dylan fan a few verses to work out which song he's actually performing. In Sydney the four-piece backing band was loud, frequently dwarfing Dylan's vocals.

There were some unforgivable sound problems but they can be put down to early tour nerves and will almost certainly be rectified as the tour progresses.

As in the '60s some people are thrilled by this revitalised 1992 Dylan while others are disappointed that he doesn't stick to the better-known presentation of his material.

And in Sydney on Monday (as he had in Perth and Adelaide on

previous nights) Dylan divided the audience. Some people walked out. "Don't come back Bob," yelled someone behind me after Dylan walked side stage to change a guitar after the fourth song.

Others considered this one of Dylan's greatest performances, and proof that far from being a tired old has been, he is revitalised and performing with the sort of intensity that has been notably absent on his last two visits to Australia.

Dylan remains the most significant and influential living rock performer. Go and see him — but go with an open mind. The times they certainly are a changin'.



Bob Dylan: the living legend of folk music left his Hobart audience bitterly disappointed.

Wind blowin' cold for superstar Dylan

By MICHAEL SMITH

ANYONE who was there would probably agree that the times are definitely a changin' for Bob Dylan.

It is not every day you get to see a living music legend on stage in Hobart, but, unfortunately, legends do not often live up to their reputations when you see them in person - at least this one didn't.

The tingling anticipation of seeing this world famous singing/poet composer in person was there, a crowd of 5000 Tasmanians was there, but Dylan himself seemed to be off somewhere else.

It was as if an older, rather tired-sounding physical replica of the man who inspired several generations with his songs was filling in for Bob.

Even the talented but out-of-place four-piece band supporting Dylan seemed to give a rock 'n' roll flavour to a performance from the man famous for his inspiring folk melodies.

For anyone who grew up with his music, criticising Dylan might seem almost blasphemous, but after Saturday night's concert at the Derwent Entertainment Centre it is almost essential.

Many who attended will now listen to the old Dylan albums lying about their homes with a new perspective.

No one can doubt Dylan, 50, is still one of the world's greatest living poets or that his influence on generations from the pre-hippie '60s up to the present day will never be forgotten.

However, the electric atmosphere this same man created on Saturday night as the lights dimmed and he sauntered on stage quickly faded after the first song.

As he made his way through *The Joker*, disappointment was etched on hundreds of faces. Was this the Bob Dylan they had waited decades to see, not to mention pay more than \$40 for? (Incidentally, TasTV was still advertising the concert the following day just to remind us).

The enthusiasm and the voice, not to mention the stage presence Dylan was famous for during the '60s and '70s had vanished.

Those who lived in the era would rave about the virtual intimacy Dylan once shared with audiences as he poured out his soul and left crowds spellbound.

But the man who remained silent in between numbers and, at times, for large parts of the song itself, did not seem to notice we were there on Saturday.

Maybe a measly 5000 people are hard to spot from the giddy heights of superstardom and with 30 years of success and hard living behind you.

Many people left early. Outside I heard one middle-aged man almost in tears telling his wife the performance was an insult to folk music and to Dylan himself.

Despite this, his rare forays into solo hits such as *Blowin' in the Wind* did bring out a touch of the Dylan we had heard so much about and brought chunks of the crowd to its feet.

Members of the audience, whether they are young and old, ponytailed or closely cropped, suited or singled, will hold the concert in their memories if only to tell friends they were there.

But the next time we listen to *Times Are A Changin'* it will be with a knowing smile and a silent agreement of Dylan's musical message.

Letters to the Editor

Dylan concert

The Mercury's reviewer, Michael Smith, must have received a rude shock to find that he was no longer living in the 1960s. Bob Dylan was no longer in his 20s and he (heaven forbid) played rock 'n' roll at his recent Hobart concert.

It is a common misconception that Bob Dylan is primarily a folk performer.

Rolling Stone magazine has said of Dylan, that his "influence on popular culture has been in the same league as the moon's influence on the tides". This was definitely not achieved by limiting himself to folk music.

Dylan has in fact been playing rock 'n' roll since as early as 1965 with such classic albums as *Subterranean Homesick Blues* (*Bringing It All Back Home*) and *Highway 61 Revisited*. Mr Smith did not mention that the title track from the latter brought many of the Hobart crowd to their feet.

It was those people, blinded by their longing for the 60s, who failed to see Dylan for what he really is - an artist who has injected some much-needed life into modern music by constantly reinventing himself.

As a result these people failed to recognise one of the greatest concerts to come to Hobart.

SCOTT McDERMOTT
Bellerive

After reading Michael Smith's review of Bob Dylan's Hobart concert ("Wind blowin' cold for superstar Dylan", April 16), I have to wonder how much of Dylan's work Mr Smith has heard.

To refer to the opening song as *The Joker* is unforgivable. Even the most casual Dylan listener would know that its correct title is *All Along the Watchtower*.

As for the "middle-aged man almost in tears telling his wife the performance was an insult to folk music", where has he been for the past 25 years? Bob Dylan's last "folk" album was recorded in the early 1960s!

Bob Dylan is certainly not

above criticism, but to compare the Dylan of today with the Dylan of the 1960s and 1970s is to ignore reality.

The man is 50 years of age and, after 30 years of recording and performing, it's hardly surprising that he feels a need to rearrange and reinterpret his old songs.

Those of us who have followed Dylan's career and listened to his music into the 1990s knew exactly what to expect and I, for one, was not disappointed.

PETER HILL
Howrah

Conway lands job of a lifetime

Melbourne singer to back Dylan here

By CHRIS COPAS

Self-confessed Bob Dylan fan Deborah Conway, the Melbourne singer and songwriter, has scored what could be her ultimate supporting role.

Conway has been selected as the show's opening act for four performances — including Dylan's two Tasmanian performances this weekend.

Dylan will line up at the Silverdome, Launceston, on Friday, and at the Derwent Entertainment Centre, Hobart, on Saturday, in his first — and most likely last — visit to Tasmania.

The two Tasmanian shows are part of his national tour, which has so far seen his Melbourne concert season extended for four to seven nights.

Conway, who toured Tasmanian hotels a few months back to promote her recent album *Strings of Pearls*, on the Mushroom label, will also play the support role at one of Dylan's Auckland concerts, and possibly his last Melbourne show.

The Dylan tour is a fitting finale to Conway's national tour which has seen her spend the last six months on the road, playing more than 100 shows.

She said that she first heard Dylan on the album *Planet Waves*, which she recorded with The Band in the early '70s, and since then had been a fan.

On her recent album, one of her songs is dedicated to Dylan.

Conway was previously the lead singer with the successful Do-Re-Mi before embarking on a solo career.

Promoter Michael Chugg said that he had hoped to have Dylan appear in Launceston on Saturday night, but the Hobart venue was already committed on the Friday night and he was forced to switch his concerts.

"But it will still be alright for fans from the Coast," Mr Chugg said.

"Dylan won't go on stage till

about 9pm, and North-West fans will have plenty of time to travel down."

He said that good seats were still available for both Dylan concerts.

Dylan's Tasmanian visit coincides with tours by two interstate bands which seem destined to place a further drain on the finances of music lovers this week.

The Sydney band Tall Tales And True will play three Tasmanian shows, lining up at the Batman Fawcett Inn, in Cameron St, on Saturday night.

The band has been one of the more original outfits out of Sydney in recent times, although their commercial success has been restricted to cities where alternative FM stations have picked up their music.

However, the band has been seen regularly on the late-night ABC-TV rock show *Rage*, and its



• Melbourne singer/songwriter Deborah Conway will be Bob Dylan's opening act for his Australian concerts.

records, distributed on rooArt through PolyGram, have sold well.

Also in town on Saturday night is another Sydney band the Splatterheads, whose appeal has been as much through their outrageous stage appearance as through the music.

The band's hard-driving music

has seen them play support for such outfits as Mudhoney and Cosmic Psychos.

They will line up the Hotel Victoria, on the corner of Brisbane and Bathurst Sts.

This is their first Tasmanian visit, and the support will be local band Clag.

Dylan puts Tasmanians to the test

'He finally fulfilled the potential of his poetry'



• Dylan... hasn't posed for photographs for 10 years.

BOB DYLAN inspires an extreme level of respect and adoration from his fans and, it would seem after his Launceston concert on Friday night, he likes to test it.

As his four-piece backing band launched into the opening *All Along The Watchtower*, Dylan moved in one-step stumbles about the microphone, delivering a vocal free of inflection or heart.

He swore to himself a couple of times, away from the microphone, and for an awful moment after the fifth song, looked like he might even leave the stage.

It was a disheartening opening, particularly after such a fine vocal performance by the supporting act, Australian singer Deborah Conway. With operatic quality voice backed by sparkling acoustic, she provided an optimistic start to the night.

And the man rated by *Life* Magazine as one of the 100 most important Americans of the century did eventually find energy and voice — enough even to speak to the crowd on three occasions.

Bob Dylan's first Tasmanian concert in Launceston on Friday night was a success, but as RICKY EAVES reports, only just...

This may seem unremarkable, but Dylan rarely speaks to his audiences any more. He won't allow photographers at his shows and according to promoter Michael Chugg, he hasn't agreed to be photographed in 10 years.

He even smiled after a roadie stopped him mid-song for a guitar swap, drawing "this bit right here is the comedy part of the show, slipping on banana peels and all that stuff..."

It almost seems that the reclusive, unpredictable Dylan has actually just honed the dynamics of performance — like a unicyclist or tight-rope walker — leaving the faithful breathless and hoping he won't leave or even fall from the stage.

Individual fans would yell "Come on Bob" and "Alright Bobby" when he regained composure. It was the beautiful *Tangled Up In Blue*, featuring mandolin and harmonica, that saw the performer in Dylan starting to fulfil the potential of his poetry.

A solo set of acoustic numbers were as close to his roots as he could get. And as he got in touch with the gospel style folk of Woody Guthrie, he also won his audience.

The biggest disappointment for the huge 40ish factor in the audience was his reworkings of classic songs including *Just Like A Woman*, *Maggies* and *Hey Mr Tambourine Man*.

Each was smoothed into bland country-rock, with the result that the first two particularly lost the distinctive rhythm of the lyric deliveries.

These were songs around which youthful ideology — and idolatry — were based. But then, in fairness to

one who must have played each song a trillion times, most such fans have by now traded the guitars of their youth for the keyboards of commerce.

Highway 61 became a driving contemporary rocker, impressively powerful and another reminder that this is 1992, after all, not 62.

Those who went for a dose of nostalgia came away unfulfilled. Importantly though, Dylan avoids self-parody by continually reinterpreting the old material.

But the biggest part of the Dylan enigma is why he bothers at all. If it makes him happy, it is not obvious. He went straight to his car after the show and drove to Hobart, in readiness for last night's show at the Derwent Entertainment Centre.

Blowin' In The Wind, done as it always should be, was an encore that made 4000 people very happy. It may be almost a cliché symbol of '60s revolution, but a solitary candle passed around one group in the audience showed that there are those who will always give Bob reason to be, now and always.

Dylan's talent slow to emerge

Legendary rock poet Bob Dylan, travelling incognito, sneaked into Tasmania on the Abel Tasman on Wednesday.

And it wasn't until a quarter of the way through last night's concert at the Silverdome that 4000 people were convinced he really was with us, body and spirit.

After first appearing over, even underwhelmed — especially during the opening *All Along The Watchtower* — he slowly found his feet, audience, harmonica and voice.

Now past 50, and with many of his classic songs gone 25, Dylan is notorious for the inconsistent quality of his concerts.

Last night Launceston fans saw him shine, though patchily, and particularly during a mid-show set of gospel folk numbers performed solo and with feeling.

By RICKY EAVES

Disappointing for many were his almost unrecognisable and mainly bland renditions of classics such as *Just Like A Woman*, *Maggies* and *Hey Mr Tambourine Man*.

But what some interpreted as arrogant disinterest was clearly forgiven. Towards the end of a show that steadily lifted, a pilgrimage of old, young, hairy and bald had jammed the barrier at the front of the stage.

The show's climax was memorable — a long-time female fan made it to the stage and conversed briefly with her unflustered hero. He let her stay on the stage for the finale... *Blowin' In The Wind*, and just as they remembered it.

More elusive than Elvis, if only because he

is still living, all efforts to locate Dylan before the concert failed.

Though he became famous denouncing "the system," he is today protected by his own "bureaucracy" — the truth of his schedule carefully confused by the promoters and definitely no cameras allowed at the concert.

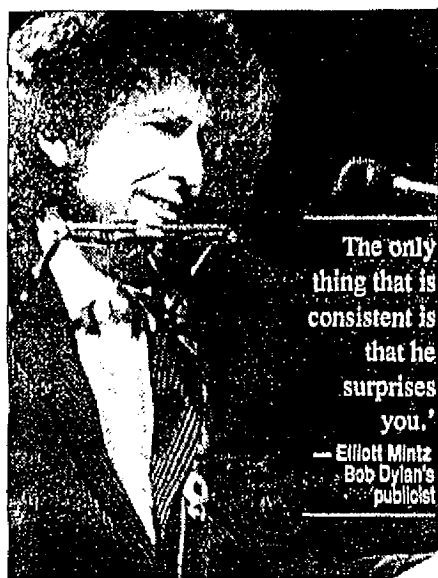
He hadn't been spotted at Cradle Mountain Lodge or the Launceston casino.

Bob Matthews, manager of Lemonthyme Lodge — a likely haven for a peace-seeking recluse — said "he could be tricking you clobber. I mean if he was here I wouldn't tell you, would I," he said, laughing and revelling in the mystery.



• Bob Dylan... inconsistent quality.

MAUI SCENE



The only thing that is consistent is that he surprises you.
— Elliott Mintz
Bob Dylan's publicist

By JON WOODHOUSE
For The Maui News

Maui's convenient location as a rest stop between continents and Bob Dylan's fondness for playing small venues has allowed popular music's most influential figure to visit our shores.

"He is returning to the States from Australia so it seemed like a logical stop," explains Dylan's publicist Elliott Mintz, answering the question many are wondering — why's Bob Dylan playing Maui?

It is hard to believe that Dylan will perform a concert here, but at 51, he is immersed in the fourth year of what he dubbed "The Never-Ending Tour." Performing around 120 dates a year, one every three days, he has been circling the globe, attracting around 3 million fans, taking his music for the first time to such distant lands as Uruguay, Hungary, Turkey and Argentina.

"If you just go out every three years or so, like I was doing for a while, that's when you lose touch," Dylan told the Los Angeles Times earlier this year. "If you're going to be a performer, you've got to give it your all."

Since he began performing over 30 years ago Dylan's creative passion has transformed the face of pop (including rap — with "Subterranean Homesick Blues"), and guided a whole generation through the turmoil of the 1960s.

This master poet's influence was so pervasive and profound he stimulated the Beatles to explore deeper lyrical dimensions. "We all went potty on Dylan," John Lennon told an interviewer. "I wasn't too keen on lyrics in those days, I didn't think they counted. Dylan used to come out with his latest acetate and say 'listen to the words man.' And I'd say I don't listen to words. Dylan taught us a lot."

It was Dylan who introduced the Beatles to the joys of pot in 1964. Lennon said: "He thought 'I want to Hold Your Hand,' when it goes, 'can't hide' — he thought we were singing 'I get high, — so he turns up, and turns us on and we had the biggest laugh all night. We've got a lot to thank him for."

As a pioneer refusing to conform to any defined stan-

DYLAN in paradise

What to expect when Bob Dylan makes a Maui stop on his Never-Ending Tour

dard Dylan has constantly sought transformation and consequently, often perplexed his audience. Folk fans were horrified by his embracement of rock and roll at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival.

"Were you surprised the first time the boss came," he was asked at a 1965 press conference. "Yeah, that was at Newport," Dylan replied. "I did this very crazy thing. I didn't know what was going to happen, but they certainly booed. They've done it in a lot of other places. They must be pretty rich to go someplace and boo. I couldn't afford it if I was it their shoes."

Fourteen years later, he alienated audiences again, booed in San Francisco at the opening of his gospel-based Slow Train Coming tour. Expect the unexpected Dylan seems to suggest. "The only thing that is consistent is that he surprises you," advises publicist Mintz.

Bob's virtually unintelligible scorching rendering of "Masters of War" at the 1991 Grammy telecast definitely surprised millions. Only the most devout fan could figure out what song he was performing, and people are still wondering is this how Bob sounds in concert? But what an appropriate composition beaming out to an America intoxicated on jingoism.

"You fasten the triggers," he spat.

"For the others to fire

Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As the young people's blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud."

It was flu, Dylan said of his provocative performance in *Spy* magazine. "My head was feeling like the Grand Canyon," he said. "Some people thought the performance on the Grammys was remarkable, Dylan's publicist suggests. "Robert Hilburn of the L.A. Times said it was one true moment of the Grammys and to sing 'Masters of War' on the eve of the Persian Gulf was courageous."

Avoiding any ruts Dylan "is constantly rephrasing and reinterpreting his work," Mintz continues. "A lot of people when they come to see Bob they tend to want to hear the songs performed the same way as it sounds on their compact disc. Any variation on that seems a jolt to them."

Besides startling his audience Dylan often surprises his backing musicians by spontaneously altering planned arrangements. "His thing is anarchy," Tom Petty band guitarist Mike Campbell told *People*. "He hates it when it's put show biz."

On the Rolling Thunder Revue tour in 1976, Rolling Stone reported Allan Ginsberg asked Dylan: "Are you getting any pleasure out of this? 'Pleasure? I never seek pleasure,'" Dylan replied Buddha-like. "There was a time years ago when I sought a lot of pleasure because I'd had a lot of pain. But I found there was a subtle relationship between pleasure and pain. So now I do what I have to do without looking for pleasure from it."

'A lot of shows over the years was people coming out of curiosity and their curiosity wasn't fulfilled... A lot of people were coming out to see The Legend, and I was trying to just get on stage and play music.'

— Bob Dylan

Forming the Traveling Wilburys in 1988 with Roy Orbison, George Harrison, Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne, Dylan seemed to be leaving some fun. Sharing the spotlight with friends Dylan sounded relaxed and content to mess around on some playful pop. A year later, he showed up on a Jewish telethon singing "Hava Nagila" with a trio called Chopped Liver.

Last year he teamed up with Brian Wilson to co-write a song for Wilson's planned second solo album which his label deemed not worthy of release and some critics hailed as a masterpiece. He recorded with Slash of Guns n' Roses, and saw his song "Emotionally Yours" from "Empire Burlesque" become a hit for the O'Jays. Upcoming plans include the production of a film on the life of drummer Buddy Rich.

In place of a new album last year Columbia released the phenomenal 3-CD "Bootleg Series," a collection of 58 alternative takes and previously unreleased songs including the brilliant "Blind Willie McTell" and "Series of Dreams." And what a delight to hear an early snippet of "Like a Rolling Stone" played in waltz time. Even in the blur of recording Dylan eagerly transforms his material.

While we can revel in his poetic genius on record, Dylan on stage steadfastly refuses to encourage even a hint of nostalgia. Maybe this explains why as he told the L.A. Times, his generation rarely attends his concerts anymore. "A lot of shows over the years was people coming out of curiosity and their curiosity wasn't fulfilled," he said. "They weren't transported back to the '60s. Lightning didn't strike. A lot of people were coming out to see The Legend, and I was trying to just get on stage and play music."

Maui will celebrate with Bob Dylan on April 22 (Earth Day), convening at a historical opportunity to experience a giant de-mythologize himself. "The most important thing is if people just attend the show without any preconceptions they will find themselves having a unique experience," says Elliott Mintz. "If they're coming to be entertained and moved he seldom disappoints."

■ **Bob Dylan** performs April 22 at 7:30 p.m. in a sold-out concert at the Royal Lahaina Tennis Stadium. Apr. 16 to Apr. 22, 1992 — MAUI SCENE

His music does the talking as he takes stage in Santa Rosa

By Philip Elwood
EXAMINER MUSIC CRITIC

SANTA ROSA — The house lights don't dim here in the Grace Pavilion on the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.

Now they're on — banks of long fluorescents — now they're off.

They were on in all their glaring glory on Saturday night shortly after 9; then they flickered off (unit by unit) and the barn-like hall was pitch black, save for flares from matches and lighters and some flashlight shafts.

Shadowy figures took positions on stage, silhouetted by amplifiers' glowing red bulbs.

There were six in all — one, wearing a hat stood front and center.

"And now, Columbia Records artist Bob Dylan," shouted an amplified voice in the darkness. Accompanied by a boisterous cheer from the couple of thousand customers in the old exhibition hall, the lights popped on, here, there, everywhere; and there he was, hunched over and squinting into the spotlights.

"Which one's Bob Dylan?" asked a 20-year-old college girl next to me.

Dylan, as has always been his wont, gave no salutation. In fact, during the subsequent 95-minute performance he acknowledged no one — audience or accompanying colleagues.

"Does he always sing *that* way?," the SRCC student asked.

"Yup, pretty much," I shouted back.

The crowd's yelps and cheers, the bombastic amplified sounds and the hall's scatter-shot acoustics made any chance of tune identification or (God knows) lyric comprehension impossible other than on a few older standards.

"Just Like a Woman" came along. Once into the lyrics Dylan seemed to slow the pace, enlarge the sound of his occasionally on-pitch voice and "aim" his voice smack out at the rowdy crowd.

When he wants to, which isn't often these days, Dylan can still display impressive emphasis in his singing and in doing so he creates a syncopation in the rhythm.

The Santa Rosa crowd didn't seem to know any of the songs well enough to sing along in the fashion of millions of guitar-carrying folkies 30 years ago. And "All Along the Watchtower" just isn't a sing-along number.

A mandolin (played by another guitarist) and pedal steel guitar (same guy) livened up some of the arrangements and drummer Ian Wallace, riding the beat of bassist Tony Garnier, knows how to create rhythmic continuity behind Dylan's lyric statements, lyrics that can easily bog down the rendition's pace.

Dylan switches guitars occasionally, playing (amplified) acoustic particularly on the ballads, which he does either solo or just with the Jackson-Garnier-Wallace trio.

"I Believe in You" would have been, had the crowd shut up, (which it never did) a memorable performance.

The Grace Pavilion has about three-quarters of it (collapsible metal) seats on the flat, asphalt floor. The rest of the seating is on backless anodized aluminum bleacher planks laid out down each side of the hall.

There is plenty of beer at the back of the unventilated hall, which also reeks of popcorn processors, cigarette and pot smoke.

Dylan plowed his way through this audio-visual (and nasal) guck fairly well, but he seemed to be sleepwalking most of it, treating it like another "useless gig."

He started "Mr. Tambourine Man" but a spaced-out young lady leaped onto the stage, grabbed the mike and started to moan and scream bits of the lyrics.

Dylan motioned to her, in fact whispered in her ear, and she finished off two or three dreadful, hysterical choruses.

Dylan never sang it!

"Early Morning Rain" was included, and a powerful "Maggie's Farm" came off quite well.

Dylan performs Monday and Tuesday at the Warfield Theater; Thursday and Friday at the Berkeley Community Theater; Saturday at the San Jose Event Center. For ticket info, call 510-762-BASS.

Dylan, out of the shadows



BOB DYLAN ON VIDEO

OFFICIAL RELEASES BARELY SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF DYLAN'S CAREER
Information by DAVID L. CLARK; commentary by PETER DOGGETT

Though Bob Dylan is best known to the general public as a recording artist, he seems to regard the studio as a barely necessary evil. Dylan views his own art as a combination of songwriting and performance, and it's that dual urge to create, and to express that creativity, which has kept him constantly on the road for nearly five years of the Never-Ending Tour.

The first irony, of course, is that Dylan is a performer who doesn't like being seen — hence the almost total absence of stage lighting for his stage performances, and his well-documented aversion to the presence of cameras. One can't help feeling that Dylan is working towards some kind of ideal stage setting in which he performs behind a gauze curtain, heard but only seen in shadow.

Irony No. 2 is that this secretive performer is obsessed with the possibilities of film. Inspired by artists like Bunuel, Cocteau and Welles, he has twice attempted to create a movie which would have the same free-flowing, yet at the same time internally structured, vision as the best of his songs. After D.A. Pennebaker had assembled footage from Dylan's 1966 European tour, and then had his own cut vetoed by Dylan, he handed the film over to Bob, who edited his own version with the aid of Howard Alk. The result was "Eat The Document", which was screened publicly in selected locations in 1971, and has since circulated more widely underground than in legitimate theatres.

CONTROVERSIAL

"Eat The Document" is our only visual record of Dylan's most controversial tour, but it neatly deflates all preconceptions about the way in which a rock movie should be presented. The camera roams through the maelstrom like a neurotic, hyper-active witness, never pausing long enough to allow the viewer to pick up any one perspective on events. The editing is fragmentary, to the point where you no sooner adjust to one scene than it is abruptly stolen away from you and replaced by something that contradicts or undercuts it. The film is full of music — glorious stage performances by Dylan and the Band, and backstage footage of Bob experimenting with new material — but few of the clips last for more than a matter of seconds. The result is unsettling, disturbing even, which probably conveys the atmosphere of the tour pretty faithfully.

In October-December 1975, Dylan and Alk tried again, this time controlling the camera-work from the outset. The apparent subject was the first Rolling Thunder Revue tour, but the finished movie, a four-hour epic entitled "Renaldo And Clara", was a mystical treatise on identity and the divided nature of the soul, which almost incidentally included some of the finest Dylan concert footage ever seen. The full-length film received a critical battering, to the point that the distributors demanded that Dylan deliver a music-heavy two-hour edit; but the long haul is essential viewing for any student of Dylan's artistic thinking, making its unavailability on video (as with "Eat The Document") frustrating.

Another irony: for a performer with such clear insight into the potential of visual images, Dylan's involvement with promoted videos has been little short of disastrous. With the exception of the clip for "Most Of The Time", which was actually a live performance, only "Jokerman" came close to matching the power of its soundtrack. By contrast, "Tight Connection To Your Heart" is a firm candidate for any "Golden Turkey" video awards. Tellingly, none of Dylan's videos is available on a commercial release.

Official home-videos are really the medium via which to explore Dylan's career, in fact.

Missing from the shelves (to name but a few possibilities) are "Festival", the 1967 documentary which included Dylan's 1965 performance at the Newport Folk Festival; the "Hard Rain" TV special from the second Rolling Thunder tour, plus its ill-fated but compelling predecessor, shot in Clearwater, Florida a month earlier but rejected by Dylan; TV appearances like the "Johnny Cash Show" from 1969, "Saturday Night Live" from 1979 and the remarkable "Late Night With Letterman" show from 1984; plus, of course, "Eat The Document" and "Renaldo And Clara".

In recent years, Dylan's office have been gathering film and video material for their archives, spawning hopes of a visual equivalent to the "Bootleg Series" album release of last year. Even after the critical acclaim awarded that project, I can't see Dylan agreeing to a video history; but I've been wrong many times before, and I hope this is another occasion.

The last irony is that there are hundreds of hours of Dylan material circulating among collectors with rapidly declining eyesight, made up of illegal videos shot at Dylan concerts over the last decade or so. Despite Alcatraz-style security, countless (and nameless) fans have satisfied their need to watch Dylan battle the Demons of Performance by smuggling camera equipment into his shows, convinced that they are doing future generations a service by documenting the most mercurial live performer of the late 20th century in his natural habitat. And they're probably right.

CONCERT FILMS

There are two main Bob Dylan music video titles, both of which are still available: **DON'T LOOK BACK**

Virgin Video VVD 251, July 1988, £12.99

D.A. Pennebaker's fly-on-the-wall film follows Dylan on his 1965 concert tour of England, with backstage conversations, radio interviews, press conferences, on-stage footage and appearances by Donovan, Joan Baez and Alan Price.

Still regarded as the definitive rockumentary, "Don't Look Back" eschewed a straightforward narrative or live concert approach in favour of an episodic, sometimes startling editing technique which reflects some of the turmoil around his last acoustic tour.

Included in the film are complete or (more often) partial live performances of "The Times They Are A-Changin'", "To Ramona", "Don't Think Twice It's All Right", "Talking World War III Blues", "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)", "Gates Of Eden" and "Love Minus Zero No Limit" (all from the U.K. live shows), backstage footage of Dylan, Joan Baez, Alan Price, Bob Neuwirth and Donovan, a brief clip of Dylan performing "Only A Pawn In Their Game" at a civil rights rally in Mississippi in July 1963, and what has come to be known as the "promo clip" for "Subterranean Homesick Blues", filmed alongside the Savoy Hotel.

HARD TO HANDLE

Virgin Video VVD 182, February 1987, £10.99

This concert film was recorded in Sydney, Australia, and featured musical support from Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers. The songs, taken from shows on 24/25th February 1986, included "In The Garden", "Just Like A Woman", "Like A Rolling Stone", "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)", "Girl Of The North Country", "Lenny Bruce", "When The Night Comes Falling From The Sky", "Ballad Of A Thin Man", "I'll Remember You" and the inevitable "Knockin' On Heaven's Door". (Six of these performances were also included on a Westwood One 4-LP transcription set in the "Superstar Concert" series.) Seeing this video, with its structured, orthodox arrangements, proved to be little preparation for the music made by the same musical team during Dylan's European tour of 1987.



ACTING ROLES

HEARTS OF FIRE

Guild Home Video 8519, April 1988, £64.95; reissued in May 1989, £10.99

This 1987 film starred Dylan as a retired big-name rocker who takes an up-and-coming singer (Fiona Flanagan) under his wing, only to find her falling for an English rock idol (Rupert Everett). Director Richard Marquand's hopes that "Hearts Of Fire" would uncover some of Dylan's mystique, and portray some of the reality of rock superstardom, proved over-optimistic. Dylan acquitted himself better than might have been expected, but made little effort to boost the project with any worthwhile musical contribution. The soundtrack album included three lacklustre performances ("The Usual", "Night After Night" and "Had A Dream About You Baby") from Dylan, plus workwomanlike rock songs by Fiona Flanagan and miserable concoctions by Rupert Everett. The film added snatches of "When The Night Comes Falling" from the 1986 tour, and a cover of Dr. Hook's "A Couple More Years".

PAT GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID

MGM/UA UMG 10159, 1982, deleted in 1987; reissued on Warner Home Video, PES 50159, September 1991, £10.99

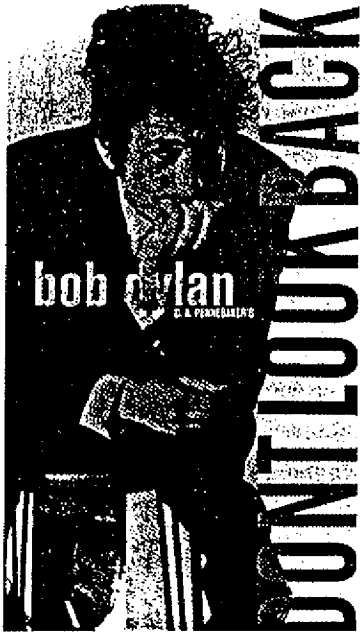
Sam Peckinpah's 1973 film version of the western legend cast Dylan as a drifter called Alas. Savagely edited against Peckinpah's wishes, the film was subsequently reissued in 1986 in a substantially reworked form, and it is this edition which is currently available on video.

The differences aren't purely visual: the role of the music was reduced in the second director's cut, while "Billy 4" was omitted from the reworked edition. In recompense, a longer version of the track known as "Billy Surrenders" was included second time around. Slightly different versions of "Billy" and "Knockin' On Heaven's Door" can be heard in the two versions of the film, while the CBS soundtrack album features different takes of several tracks to those heard in either cut of Peckinpah's movie.

CATCHFIRE

First Independent VA 20135, May 1991, £54.95; reissued VA30226, April 1992, £10.99

Dylan makes a cameo appearance as an art teacher in this 1989 thriller about an underworld killer (Dennis Hopper) who falls for his quarry (Jody Foster).



And they said the Stones were stroppl! "Don't Look Back", filmed in 1965, found Dylan giving the Brit-rockers a lesson in 'attitude'.

COMPILATION APPEARANCES

JOHN HAMMOND: FROM BESSIE SMITH TO BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
(FIM Enterprises 49057 2, June 1991, £10.99)

A documentary film about the renowned Columbia Records producer who championed many protest movement rock singers of the 60s and 70s. It includes a number of very brief Dylan clips — "Only A Pawn In Their Game" ("Don't Look Back"), "Blowin' In The Wind" (set to scenes of Dylan in the recording studio), "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" (from the "Quest" TV show in 1963), "Subterranean Homesick Blues" (concept clip from "Don't Look Back"), and "Like A Rolling Stone" set to archive footage of Dylan's fans back in the 60s. Surprisingly, perhaps, it included none of Dylan's performances from the "World Of John Hammond" tribute TV special filmed in 1975.

JOHNNY CASH: THE MAN, HIS WORLD, HIS MUSIC
(Intervision Video, 1980, deleted in 1981, £39.95)

This 1970 film profile of the country singer includes a scene showing Dylan and Cash performing "One Too Many Mornings" in the recording studio, during a lengthy session in Nashville in February 1969. A clip of the pair recording "Girl From The North Country" was included alongside "One Too Many Mornings" in a Cash TV special made for educational TV in 1969, but has not been released commercially on video. One wonders how much of the session, which produced 16 duets between Dylan and Cash, actually exists on film.

THE CONCERT FOR BANGLADESH
(Thorn-EMI TVD 90 0911 2, August 1983, £19.99; reissued on Weintraub/Warner Home Video PES 38084, May 1990, £10.99)

Dylan performs "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" on this 1972 concert film of George Harrison's charity concert (August 1st 1971) at New York's Madison Square Garden. All four performances came from the evening, rather than the afternoon, show; Dylan also sang "Mr Tambourine Man" at that concert, but this track was omitted from the movie.

COUNTRY MUSIC VIDEO MAGAZINE — PREMIER COLLECTORS EDITION
(BMG Video 790453, September 1990, £10.99)

This quarterly country music video-magazine includes an extremely brief clip of Dylan performing "Mr Tambourine Man" with the Byrds during the January 1990 'Roy Orbison Tribute' at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles. The entire performance was shown on U.S. TV, and later included on the Byrds' four-CD retrospective, but remains frustratingly unavailable on video.

THE LAST WALTZ

(Warner Home Video PEV 99354, February 1985; reissued as PES 99354, June 1988, £10.99)

The Band's 1976 farewell concert took on historic proportions when Bob Dylan joined the group on stage to perform "Forever Young", "Baby Let Me Follow You Down" and "I Shall Be Released", the latter with an all-star cast including Ringo Starr, Ron Wood, Neil Young, Eric Clapton, Joni Mitchell and Van Morrison. Dylan's set closed the formal part of the concert: it was structured as a five-song medley which was topped and tailed by "Baby Let Me Follow You Down", and incorporated "Hazel", "I Don't Believe You" and "Forever Young". The soundtrack album to the movie omitted "Hazel", while the film itself also chopped the first "Baby Let Me Follow You Down" and "I Don't Believe You".

THE OTHER SIDE OF NASHVILLE

(MGM/UA UMY 10351, August 1984, £19.99; repackaged and reissued as SMV 10351, October 1986, £9.99; and on Channel 51 Polygram CFM 02542, July 1990, £10.99)

A documentary history of country music, this includes the aforementioned clip of Dylan and Cash performing "One Too Many Mornings".

ROCK'N'ROLL — THE GREATEST YEARS: 1963 — BUY IT AND BOOGIE!
(The Video Collection VC 4054, September 1988, £10.99)

A live version of "Blowin' In The Wind" was Dylan's contribution to this collection of songs dating from 1963.



A live clip of "Blowin' In The Wind" appeared on "Rock'n'Roll: The Greatest Years: 1963" video. Note the wrong-era Dylan photo!

ROLLING STONE — 20 YEARS OF ROCK
(Castle Hending CASH 5022, October 1989; reissued as HEN 2 315, 1991, £10.99)

This whistle-stop tour through rock music from the mid-60s to the mid-80s includes a live clip of Dylan performing "Tangled Up In Blue", taken from the "Renaldo And Clara" film.

SIXTIES MIX USA

(Stylus Video SV 0855/2, May 1988, £9.99; deleted in 1990)

Dylan plays "Mr Tambourine Man" live on this collection of segued 60s music by American artists.

USA FOR AFRICA — WE ARE THE WORLD: THE VIDEO EVENT

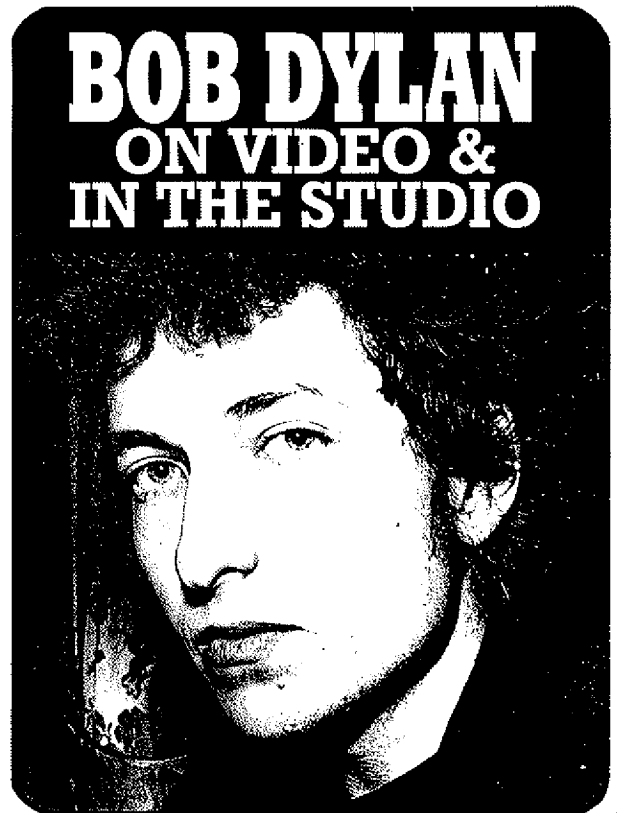
(Picture Music International MVP 99 1106 2, November 1985, £9.99; reissued on PM's Price Attack label, MVA 004, May 1990, £5.99)

Dylan was just one of many megastars included in the line-up of the "We Are The World" famine-relief fund-raising disc. This video release shows each stage of its recording, followed by the complete promo clip for the song.

A VISION SHARED: A TRIBUTE TO WOODY GUTHRIE AND LEADBELLY

(CMV Enterprises 01-649006-81, January 1989, £12.99)

This documentary looks at the music and lives of early American folk musicians Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly, with songs and comments from a succession of contemporary rock and folk musicians. It was based around the album of the same name, which included a 1987 recording of Dylan performing Guthrie's "Pretty Boy Floyd". Although most of the artists on the record either performed or mimed to their LP tracks for the video, Dylan's contribution was restricted to the original 1961 studio version of his tribute "Song To Woody", set to a series of still photographs.



IN THE STUDIO

AL KOOPER ON DYLAN

Few musicians survive in Bob Dylan's company — either on the road or in the studio — for more than around five years. Dylan thrives on change and lack of continuity. So it says something about Al Kooper as a man and a musician that he has been working with Dylan — not continually, but regularly — since 1965. Insinuating his way slyly into the recording session for "Like A Rolling Stone", he was on hand for almost all Dylan's sessions during the initial 'electric' period.

Although he was known primarily as a guitarist in 1965, Kooper established a niche as Dylan's keyboard player, not only in the studio but also at the Newport Folk Festival and at the tempestuous shows at Forest Hills Stadium and the Hollywood Bowl in late 1965. The following year, he was a major contributor to the "Blonde On Blonde" album. After four years' gap, he rejoined Dylan to make "Self Portrait" and "New Morning" in 1970 — effectively overseeing the entire creation of the latter album, a project which led to a decade-long estrangement between the two musicians.

In 1981, out of the blue, Kooper was requested to join Dylan's band for a three-month U.S. tour, and since then, he has been present at one or more of the sessions for every Dylan studio record apart from "Oh Mercy". During a long and wide-ranging interview about his entire career, Kooper offered his thoughts on the joys and drawbacks of working with Bob.

RECORD COLLECTOR: How did the initial link-up with Dylan come about?

AL KOOPER: I met Dylan through Tom Wilson, who was a staff producer at CBS in the early Sixties. CBS didn't know what to do with Dylan, so Tom got him by default. There was no-one else there who could really fit in with Bob, because the CBS A&R department was still very much orientated towards MOR. When Bob decided he didn't want to work with John Hammond anymore, he ended up with Wilson.

Tom would use me on sessions every once in a while as a guitar player, and he knew I loved Dylan, so he invited me to a session to watch, which was a real privilege. He put his neck on the line to do that. I was very ambitious in those days, and... well, I don't want to tell that story again, because I've told it so many times, and it always ends up being twisted around, but I managed to get myself into the corner of the studio playing organ. Tom covered himself very well, by immediately telling Dylan that he could stop me playing, and that I wasn't really an organ player — and he wasn't lying. But Bob loved what I was doing.

I only had a rudimentary knowledge of the keyboard at that stage. We used to go back to Bob's house and listen to records by people like P.F. Sloan and laugh ourselves silly, because they had top session guys like Larry Knechtel trying to imitate what I had done on "Like A Rolling Stone". The irony of that was not wasted on me.

RC: Have you heard Mouse's "A Public Execution" from 1966? That was a great imitation of that Dylan sound?

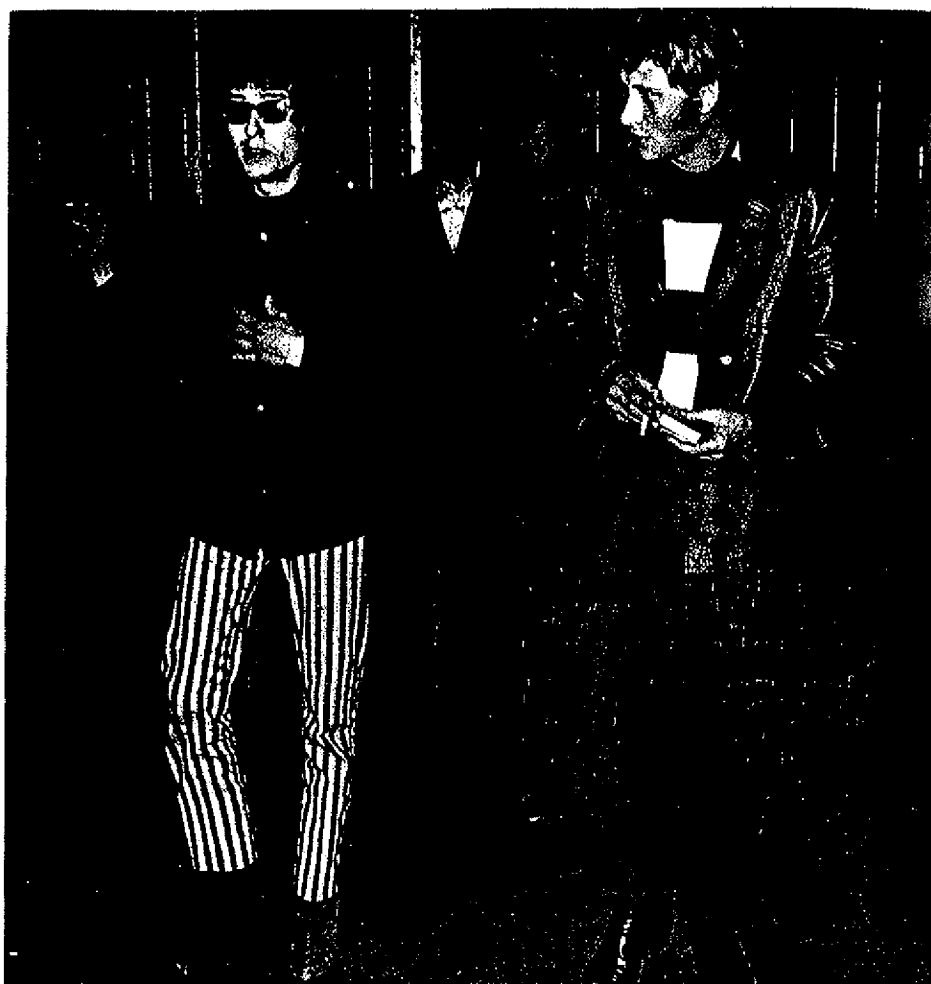
AK: Yeah, and there's another one on the same label — Bob Seger's "Persecution Smith".

RC: You're credited in the booklet for the Dylan compilation "The Bootleg Series" as playing organ on the waltz-tempo version of "Like A Rolling Stone", but I can't hear you.

AK: No, that was done while I was still in the control room. On all these bootlegs, even the authorised ones, they get the personnel wrong. They're always mistaking Kooper/Bloomfield tracks for Band tracks and vice versa. I got credit for stuff I didn't do, and then no credit for the tracks I did play on.

RC: Whose decision was it for Dylan to record "Blonde On Blonde" in Nashville?

AK: That was very much at Bob Johnston's urging. Dylan wasn't sure it was a good idea



1966's *Godparents of Cool*, Bob Dylan and French singing heart-throb, Johnny Halliday.

so he brought me and Robbie (Robertson) along, to have some part of his past there. I was really glad I went, because the Nashville musicians were fabulous.

RC: What did they think of Dylan?

AK: They didn't know how he was! Anyway, Bob really kept to himself. We'd record all night, then he'd sleep, get up and call me over to his room. I was his cassette player. He'd teach me a song and I'd play it over and over again and he'd write the lyrics. He had a piano in his room. Then I'd go to the session an hour before him, and teach the band the songs that I knew, so that they'd be ready to go when he came in.

I really enjoyed the professionalism that the Nashville guys exhibited. It was so slovenly in New York, and that's exactly the difference between "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Blonde On Blonde". "Highway 61" is just the guys slogging through it, while "Blonde On Blonde" sounded like a record, for the first time. The level of musicianship raised me up, too, and made me play a lot better. I think it's the quintessential Bob album. Finally he was in the situation where he could take the songs and really do them justice — get a 'record' sound without having to overdub.

RC: How did that compare with the sessions for the next album you worked on with Bob, "Self Portrait" in 1970?

AK: I don't know what he was looking for on "Self Portrait". We'd just go in and do 'cover' songs, all day long.

RC: Wasn't it obvious to everyone that the stuff you were cutting wasn't up to scratch?

AK: By this time we were really good friends,

so his charisma had worn off for me. He was just this guy, you know, not some super-human. But the other people on the session were really excited just to be there, and so everyone approached it with the enthusiasm they would have done if it was a new Dylan song they were doing.

RC: Judging from the credits of "New Morning", it looks as though the album was virtually a collaboration between you and Dylan.

AK: Well... (hesitates for a few seconds) OK. I produced that record. Bob Johnston got the credit, but he wasn't even there. It was a bad experience — I like the album in retrospect, but it was a bad experience. I'll never do it again. Dylan just changed his mind from second to second. For me, it was nerve-racking, devastating — all those things — and we were lucky we got what we got.

The fulcrum of the album was a stage show they were trying to do, an adaptation of Archibald MacLeish's "The Devil And Daniel Webster". Then it fell through, and so Bob had a bunch of songs he'd written for the project, like "Father Of Night", and we recorded them. Then it just went on and on. We did some cover versions at those sessions, too, a whole bunch of stuff. "Mary Ann" was one of the songs...

RC: Which came out on that weird "Dylan" album in 1973...

AK: On that record they used all the wrong takes, though, and the mixing was diabolical. Somewhere I have this great version of "Mr Bojangles", which is not the one that was on that album.

IN THE STUDIO

CHARLIE MCCOY ON DYLAN

RC: I read somewhere that you were asked to go on the road with Dylan in 1970.

AK: I've read that too, but it's not true. That's probably the same book that says we made two trips to Nashville to record "Blonde On Blonde", when I know for a fact we only made one. When it comes to Dylan books, Bob Spitz's was the best one. I didn't talk to him, and there was a lot of muckraking and stuff, but it was very accurate. Most of them, when they're writing about situations where I was in the room, they're always wrong. That book was pretty much on the nail. It paints the closest picture of them all.

RC: Why did you not work with Dylan again until 1981?

AK: We didn't speak to each other for about seven years, we had a falling out. It's not important what it was about, but I just threw in the towel. Then someone from his office came to me, and asked if I would go down to a rehearsal Bob was doing for a tour. I thought, well, there goes my seven years of good luck! I just went down out of curiosity.

What happened was that they had already done two or three days of rehearsals, and the keyboard player, Willie Smith, had quit. Bob was really stuck, because he had this whole tour booked. So I played the rehearsal, and we did about 35 songs. I knew most of them already. Then there were about two days before the first gig of a three-and-a-half month tour. Our business guys were butting heads, and I was still half packed, not knowing what was happening. Eventually, I told my manager, "Look, I don't care if I go or not; just make sure the deal is right". I don't think Bob had a choice in the end, as I don't think there was anyone else who could have done it.

It turned out to be an interesting experience. When we started, it was probably 80% Christian material, and 20% oldies. Midway, it had switched to 70% oldies, 30% Christian; by the end, it was hardly Christian at all, and neither was Bob!

So little by little I knocked the Christianity out of him. I was thinking to myself at the time, this is what I should be remembered for, if nothing else! I think my being there helped a lot to bring him back to the real world.

The next time I played with him was on "Empire Burlesque". That was just a fluke. I came to visit, and I brought a guitar with me, really just to show it to him. They were out in the studio playing, and I said to the engineer, "Can you plug me in direct, but don't let them hear it, or disturb them in any way". Then when Bob came in, I said, "Look, I was sitting here playing. Do you want to hear what I was doing? I don't care either way." He said "Sure" and it ended up on the record, though only very low in that weird mix they had. That was "When The Night Comes Falling", which was a powerful song which didn't get recognised as such. It was like "All Along The Watchtower" part two.

RC: Did you play on "Brownsville Girl", which was really the highlight of those mid-80s albums for me?

AK: No. That was finished, and then he went in again and redid the vocal and added stuff to it. I thought that was terrific, the little glimmer that we were all hoping for. I was real excited when that came out, though the rest of the "Knocked Out Loaded" album was dire. We cut a lot of stuff for that album that was great, but he didn't use it. But I think the nadir was "Down In The Groove".

RC: On "Under The Red Sky", it sounded as if you were simply being asked to reproduce what you'd done on "Like A Rolling Stone".

AK: It wasn't really like that. My whole approach to any session is to play what the artist would play if they were playing that particular instrument. At those sessions, the producer, Don Was, said to me that when Bob and I play together, it's just a special thing that we have; and I think so too. But we never really talk about it.

From 1961, when he played his first recording date, through to the early 1980s, Charlie McCoy was one of the busiest and most successful sessionmen in Nashville. He now acts as musical director for the country TV show "Hee Haw", as well as pursuing his own recording career as an instrumentalist. But he's probably best known to RC readers as a name in the credits of albums by artists like Elvis Presley, Joan Baez, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Al Kooper and many more besides. He was also a founding member of the innovative country-rock crossover outfit, Area Code 615, who made two influential albums at the end of the Sixties. One of their tracks, "Stone Fox Chase", was adopted as the theme tune for BBC TV's "The Old Grey Whistle Test", and it was Charlie's harmonica which introduced Bob Harris and Anne Nightingale every week for the best part of fifteen years.

Charlie McCoy was also involved in all Bob Dylan's recording sessions in Nashville, working on five successive albums from "Highway 61 Revisited" to "Self Portrait". We caught up with him for a brief conversation during a break in the shooting of the last series of "Hee Haw", and asked him what he remembered of Dylan's most mercurial and unorthodox sessions.

RECORD COLLECTOR: How did you first get invited to play on a Dylan session?

CHARLIE MCCOY: In 1965, I went to New York to go to the World's Fair. A friend of mine there, Bob Johnston, had told me to call him if I ever came to the city, and he'd get me some Broadway theatre tickets. So I called him for that reason alone, and asked him what he was up to that afternoon. He said, "I'm recording a song with Bob Dylan, and he'd like to meet you". So I went down and met Bob, who said that he had one of my records, which I was amazed about. Then he suggested I stick around and play. I asked him what instrument he wanted from me, and Bob said, "Play guitar". And that was "Desolation Row", on which I played acoustic guitar.

After that, Bob Johnston talked him into coming down to Nashville to record "Blonde On Blonde". I think that Dylan was a little reluctant at first, but the fact that he and I had gotten on so well in the studio — plus Bob Johnston was really pushing him towards it — finally persuaded him to say, "OK, I'll try it".

RC: What was the reaction in Nashville to Dylan? Did he turn up with a huge entourage?

CM: All that was with him was his manager, Albert Grossman. To be honest with you, the whole thing was hush-hush the first time he came down. A lot of people in this town who were heavily into the country music industry didn't really know much about Bob Dylan. It wasn't until after he'd been here that artists like Flatt & Scruggs started recording albums of his songs.

RC: Was there any feeling that this guy from New York shouldn't be invading Nashville?

CM: Absolutely not. History will tell us that his coming here was one of the biggest things that ever happened to Nashville. At the time, nobody realised it, but it opened the door for all these other people to come down — the Byrds, Joan Baez, Buffy Sainte-Marie, and so forth. It was like, "Hey, if it's OK for Dylan then it must be OK down there". It was a great thing for the town.

RC: Bob Johnston has a reputation for standing back as a producer and letting things just happen.

CM: When I first met him, he came up here as a songwriter from Texas, and he used to use me, and some of my friends for his demo

sessions. He was quite creative then, and would start to take charge of what was going on. But when he became a producer, working with people like Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel, he just kinda laid back, that's true. **RC:** Were you aware that Dylan might have been having any drugs problems during the sessions for "Blonde On Blonde"?

CM: Not at all. Bob was a real quiet kinda guy. He wasn't someone who would go around and have small talk with the rest of the band, he just didn't do that. He really had very little to say to anybody. You could ask him what he thought about what you were playing, and he'd say, "I don't know — what do you think?"

The first night he came in, we were booked into the studio at 6pm, and he said, "You all just wait, I haven't finished writing the song yet." That was "Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands". We eventually started recording at 4am the next morning. We were used to doing four songs in every three-hour session, and the hardest thing we did that night was stay awake, thinking that at any minute he was going to come back and expect us to be ready. That was pretty bizarre behaviour for Nashville.

RC: How did you end up playing bass and trumpet simultaneously on "Rainy Day Women"?

CM: Bob wanted a real Salvation Army deal on that song, and he needed a trumpet and a trombone. I told him I could handle the trumpet, and I called in a friend of mine (Bill Atkins) to play trombone. We were just goofing off, you know, and I picked up the trumpet while I was playing the bass, which was something I did onstage. Bob saw me, and said, "Yeah, let's record it like that!"

RC: Did you hear anything from him after the album was finished?

CM: Not until he came back to do "John Wesley Harding", when everything was different. The songs were shorter, there was something about him that had changed, and while the sessions for "Blonde On Blonde" just went on and on and on, we cut the whole of "John Wesley Harding" in nine-and-a-half hours. For most of it, there was only three of us there — me on bass, Kenny Buttrey on drums, and Bob. Maybe Pete Drake was there for a song or two.

Then on "Nashville Skyline", Charlie Daniels was there — he was a songwriter at that time, trying to get a few sessions as a guitarist, and he'd become good friends with Bob Johnston.

RC: The last album you did with Dylan was "Self Portrait". Do you have any idea what he was trying to create out of that strange mixture of covers and new songs?

CM: In my estimation, Bob had already decided by that point that he wasn't going to work with Bob Johnston any more — for what reason, I don't know. Bob Johnston brought us a tape full of demos that Dylan had done — just guitar or piano, and vocals — and on a lot of the songs, Kenny Buttrey and I simply overdubbed drums and bass. Dylan did do a couple of sessions here for that album, but he wasn't here for the whole thing, by any means.

I'm not sure, actually, that "Self Portrait" was a "mutual agreement" project. Either Dylan told Bob to just go ahead and finish it up, by taking those demos and patching them up; or else maybe Bob Johnston still had to come up with some more tracks to complete his production contract with Dylan, and he just did them off his own bat. We never knew what the deal was.

With Dylan expect the unexpected

By MICHAEL EPIS

AGED 50 and with 39 albums under his belt, Bob Dylan is about to embark on his fourth tour of Australia — and, typically, it will be something out of the ordinary.

It will take in most capital cities but, this time, Dylan has chosen to play small venues — St Kilda's 2800-seat Palais Theatre and the similarly-sized State Theatre in Sydney, for example.

When MMM's D-Generation broke the news he would be playing the Palais on April 1, many listeners thought it was a cruel April Fool's Day hoax.

"It's all the same tour, the never-ending tour," Dylan said three years ago when he first took this band on the road. "It's just better to keep it out there with breaks... extended breaks."

The Never-Ending Tour will also extend to smaller towns — Canberra, Hobart, even Launceston. Tour promoter Michael Gudinski says Newcastle is still being negotiated and Darwin was ruled out only because "it didn't make sense".

Dylan's decision to play such towns is a commitment to his concept of his own art. Always having preferred touring to recording, he has reconciled himself to a life on the road, and recognised his art works better in the intimacy of a theatre rather than the yawning, concrete bowels of a stadium.

Gudinski first brought Dylan here with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers in 1986, in typical fashion receiving a 4am phone call from Dylan's people taking up an offer he'd made six months earlier.

He's even more excited this time, inspired by the rave reviews of similar Dylan shows at London's Hammersmith Odeon in 1990.

"Some of the hard-core Dylan fans who wanted the real, vintage Dylan might have thought the Petty thing detracted from it," Gudinski said.

Gudinski's plan was to play a large number of shows at small theatres in Melbourne in Sydney, but it soon mushroomed to include bigger venues in Adelaide and Brisbane with special guests, as well as the small towns.

"It's a very special tour for us, and must be up there (as the tour I'm most proud of), Dylan in such a small theatre is just fantastic," Gudinski says.

That will make about 120 shows for Dylan in 12 months, criss-crossing more than 100,000km of the globe's surface, all the way from Brazil to Hungary to Launceston. Like Mr Tambourine Man: "Wait only for my boot heels to be wandering".

Back in the '60s Dylan described himself as "just a song and dance man". Few have ever danced to Dylan, even when he performed Springsteen's *Dancin' In The Dark*

after an audience request a few years back.

He is more a troubador, the travelling bards originating in 11th-Century France, who roamed from town to town, earning their living from performing long, narrative love-songs while enjoying great freedom of speech and even political influence, their identity often anonymous during performance thanks to a mask.

Dylan has adopted a similar attitude to his own identity, his legend. The Never-Ending Tour has often seen him perform on stages so dimly lit he merges into the shadows. Hooded jackets and baseball caps over his cast-down face sometimes complete the effect. Like Mr Tambourine Man: "I'm ready for to fade into my own parade".

But no matter how hard Dylan tries, he cannot shake his legend. The nonchalant Live Aid performance before a worldwide audience of tens of millions, and his bewilderment and rage at a seemingly drunken performance he gave at last year's Grammy's only increase his aura.

Dylan the fourth time around promises to be a different incarnation. When in 1966 he stepped onto Festival Hall's stage in his own psychedelic haze, backed by The Band and a huge American flag, Australia was given advance notice of what the '60s would be like.

INTRODUCING one song, he said it was about a painter, Tom Thumb, aged 125, going through his blue period. A teenager screamed uncontrollably. "You know Tom Thumb?" Dylan deadpanned.

The press were incredulous, as were many of the fans, sitting in stunned, rapt attention. Australian audiences were the only ones not to boo that tour, the first time Dylan went electric.

The 1978 tour was a radically different affair, as thousands were drenched while the sequinned, big-band-backed Dylan turned on astounding performances of love songs and torch ballads at the Myer Music Bowl.

Battling the bitter pangs of divorce and the spiritual void that saw him turn to an abiding Christian faith, his performances then, as well as in Sydney and Adelaide, burnt deep into many memories.

Eight years later he was back with Tom Petty and band, playing Kooyong and other stadiums. What the shows gained in length they lost in intensity, but the crowd still loved it, its collective voice rumbling through the chorus of *Like A Rolling Stone*, sending it around the stadium and bouncing back off the encircling freeway.

Only a fool would predict what



Dylan will get up to this time, but what can be said for certain is that he will be backed by his band of one-year-standing: guitarist John Jackson, bassist Tony Garnier and drummer Ian Wallace. Adelaide and Brisbane will also see Grammy-winner Bonnie Raitt and Marc Cohn on-stage.

Recent US shows have featured songs from the '60s, '70s and '80s, clocking in at 90 to 100 minutes, but Gudinski recognises his unpredictability: "You can never predict, but the show won't be the same every night."

To that end Dylan has also requested different support acts every night. Deborah Conway, Kev Carmody, Chris Wilson and Archie Roach are mooted supports. Dylan wanted Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi too, but they couldn't make it.

Hard-core fans would, of course, be happy with just Dylan, acoustic guitar and harmonica — and he's promised that as well.

As that song goes: "Hey Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me." The Never-Ending Tour rumbles on.

● Dylan will perform at the Palais Theatre on April 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

● Bob Dylan: his coming tour is likely to maintain a history of surprises.

It's tough enough for songwriters to escape Dylan comparisons without actually sharing his name. But such is the fate of JAKOB DYLAN, youngest son of the Bob, who, along with his band, the WALLFLOWERS, might just be up to the challenge created by genetics and the general public. The band's arresting debut is a far cry from most of the music of its native L.A. "There's a good scene here that's overlooked," says Dylan. "There's so many metal bands, it's hard to discover that." Now that he's been discovered, Dylan plans to let listeners interpret his songs on their own. "They're just stories," he says. "Obviously, they're personal, but I haven't been divorced this year. It sounds like I've been through hell, but I haven't."



THE WALL FLOWERS The Wall Flowers

VIRGIN AMERICA

Though a young band, L.A.'s The Wallflowers tap their American roots on their debut, yielding a hickory-smoked backwoods feel. Jakob Dylan's weatherbeaten vocals, when pitched against the swirling organ, sound like his more famous namesake backed by The Band. They're at their best when rocking out — the few acoustic songs sound too weary. ■■■■

DAVE MORRISON

Bob Roberts is not. God knows, it's a strong enough idea: a mock-documentary chronicling an ultra-right wing Republican (and reactionary folk singer) on the campaign trail. The directorial debut of Tim Robbins, it begins promisingly, charting Roberts' early career in music as a kind of anti-Dylan, with album titles like 'The Times, They Are A-Changin' Back' and 'Bob On Bob'. But then the interviews begin, with campaign managers, Bob's hippie parents and so on, and you realise that all these people are acting. It just doesn't look like a documentary.

DEAR Q

Re: Q&A, Q68 and the somewhat scanty information about the rumoured recording session in late 1965 featuring Bob Dylan, Brian Jones and Otis Redding.

It is curious that not one of the published biographies (including Clinton Heylin's) makes any reference whatsoever to this event taking place.

As an inveterate collector of Bob Dylan rumours, I do however recall the source of this particular tale being a mention in a contemporary Melody Maker news column. However, the Maker reported that the soul singer supposedly sitting in with the ill-fated Rolling Stone and the blue-eyed so-called spokesman of his generation for the impromptu jam was Wilson Pickett, not Otis Redding.

Yours Bobbly,

Keith Landry, Champaign, Illinois, USA.

GETTING ON WITH RON



Bob Dylan

"I think he likes to experiment, sometimes to his detriment. It's very difficult to know what he's thinking. Being a Gemini, I think I understand him more than many musicians, but you never really understand Bob. He's strange. Some days he's hot, some days he's cold."

"I've done all my shit and bollocks with that," the lifestyle-roughened voice loses its warmth. "It's very nice of me to be like that, because I needn't. But, like with Dylan, when I'm in the company of the people who wrote those songs all those years ago, I have a lot of respect for them, for what they did originally. And they'll have a lot of respect for what I'm doing now, so it all evens out."

BARBARA DICKSON Don't Think Twice It's Alright

SONY CONCEPTS CD 25

Barbara Dickson is an odd case. Her career has spanned every aspect of showbiz: from a weekly slot on *The Two Ronnies* and pop hits (January February) to stints in Willy Russell musicals (*Blood Brothers*) and forays into bits of *Evita* and *Chess*. Now she returns with her strange, pure voice to regale us with an album of Bob Dylan songs. It's a strange album: with over modern arrangements as Dickson coos her way through some of Dylan's most

militant music (*With Goo On Our Side*, *Oxford Town*, *Hard Rain*), the effect is somewhat cold and clinical. All the passion she puts into her singing, which follows the ice-pure Joan Baez style of singing Bob, is thus smoothed out by unimaginative synth arrangements and a sort of fake dance beat. There is a spark to her version of *When I Paint My Masterpiece* and real feeling to *Tears Of Rage*, but this is all outweighed by pointless remouldings of Magg's Farm (almost robo-disco) and just what the world needs today — a plod through *Blowin' In The Wind*. ★★ Jimmy Nicol



DYLAN: A MAN CALLED ALIAS

Richard Williams
Bloomsbury, £18.99

This expensive coffee-table tome (nice, big, crisp pics, lots of colour, thin, bog-standard biog) is a close lookalike of Jonathan Cott's superior 1984 volume, *Dylan*. There's nothing new at all in the text, which is not only spattered with minor factual inaccuracies but is also, occasionally, very sloppily written (Did Sara – pictured above with Bob and the Boblins in Woodstock – really "bend down to look at (her) broken, bare-headed" motorcycle-mangled husband in 1966?). Still, the book's photos, many of them familiar from the 1984 Cott book, are its salvation. Just. ★★

Sue Elliott

TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH...

Ten classic divorce albums

2 Blood On The Tracks

Bob Dylan and his wife Sara had temporarily split before making his '75 masterpiece. "(It was) somewhat about that," said *His Heartbrokenness*. "But I'm not going to make an album and lean on a marriage relationship"

BOB DYLAN

More Bob Dylan Greatest Hits
COLUMBIA 467851 2

Targeted principally at the fortysomething Dylan fans who've been meaning to replace that scratched and coffee stained vinyl LP, the re-release of Dylan's back catalogue on mid-price CD provides ample opportunity for a new generation to check out what all the fuss was about. First released in 1971, this LP scooped up the best of Dylan not contained on the first volume as well as five then-new songs. With songs straddling both side of the contentious acoustic/electric divide, this is as good a place as any to dip into Dylan. Apart from the relative slightness of *If Not For You* and *The Mighty Quinn*, it's a double LP of triple whammy proportions – a scorching selection of quintessential Dylan songs which includes *Lay Lady Lay*, *Maggie's Farm*, *All Along The Watchtower*, *It's All Over Now*, *Baby Blue* and *I Shall Be Released*. ★★ ★★

Paul Davies

NINA SIMONE

Songs Of The Poets

EDSELEDCD 347

A resident in New York during the folk-protest explosion of the early '60s, Nina Simone picked up on Dylan early on. Moving easily between jazz and folk, Simone provided a necessary bridge between Coltrane and Baez, folk protest and soul. From 1976, this mixed-bag finds Simone taking on four Dylan songs, George Harrison's *Here Comes The Sun* and live versions of three of her tunes including *To Be Young Gifted And Black*. The sleeve notes claim that Dylan and Harrison are "poets in the Greek sense" but, fortunately, Simone doesn't defer. The odd word or phrase gets discarded during *Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues* or *Just Like A Woman*, she works around the melodies in her own wayward style, yet makes every song sound like it was written for her stern yet vulnerable personality and her own *I Want A Little Sugar In My Bowl* shows she's too saucy to worry about tags like "poet". The title may be a misnomer, the tracks may have been thrown together but Simone is at her most regal throughout. ★★ ★

Mark Cooper

Bob Dylan's never-ending tour has pulled into Hollywood. Springsteen and Jon Landau, his manager/producer/friend for the last 17 years, join the crowds at the Pantages Theatre to watch the Godfather of all the legends continue the process of "dismantling his myth". An enquiry about whether he thinks it inevitable that he should go through the same process of deconstruction draws the usual considered response from Springsteen.

Yes, he says, it's tough when you've had as much impact as Dylan's had. Then the rueful smile returns. "But as far as the whole myth thing goes, then hell, it ends up being dismantled for you anyway. It doesn't matter whether you do it or not, somebody's going to do it, you know? There's usually some elements of truth in it and there's usually a lot of bullshit in it that you've contrived in some fashion.

"I don't think any of that stuff really stands for very long anyway and that's as it should be. Whatever your recent image is, there are elements that are part of who you are and part of your personality but a lot of it is just some sort of collective imagining that you may have contributed to in some fashion and in other ways you haven't. It can end up being confining and so the best thing is to have all the holes poked in it. And," he cackles, "everybody's always willing to help you out!"

Unlike most rock stars, Springsteen has exceptionally good taste in the music of others and can always be relied upon for tips: current recommendations include David Baerwald's *Bedtime Stories*, LA hard rock band *Social Distortion* and Dylan's *Blind Willie McTell*, "a masterpiece". "I try to think like a fan," he says. "If I came to my music right now, what would I be looking for? I think people come to my music looking for certain specific things and in my head I make some of my music for that fan, initially. These records had to go to a certain place. I had a lot of changes in my life and everything you do ends up in the papers and so I was concerned with making music that was a connection."

Gypsy's fire still burns for Dylan

A DANCER who had what she describes as a spiritual and physical love affair with rock star Bob Dylan five years ago will ask him to marry her when he arrives for an Australian tour next month.

Emelia Gypsy Fire, 45, also intends to ask Dylan to find a producer for a film she wants to make about a court case in which she sued Melbourne's *Truth* newspaper for defamation.

A self-described "positive creative artistic spiritual adviser", Gypsy Fire said she did not know whether she would go to Dylan's concerts, but would not mind if someone gave her tickets, as she could not afford them herself.

However, she said she knew she would be meeting Dylan and wanted to dance for him just as she did last time in his Melbourne hotel room.

"I'll be doing my tribal dance for him this time, if he lets me, to Yothu Yindi," she said.

She said she had to see Dylan to give him the 900 pages of court transcript regarding the film and the story about what she went through to meet him.

"I think his response could be 'Yeah, let's make a



● Emelia Gypsy Fire

movie', and that would be just wonderful," she said.

"He said I inspired him, he said I was special, he said I was different, I was spiritual — and I want to inspire him a little bit more."

Gypsy Fire lives with her

son Adam, 14, in a modest flat in the Sydney beachside suburb of Coogee.

The walls are dotted with posters of Dylan and other "obsessions", including Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi and a photograph of an inmate she used to visit regularly at Long Bay Jail.

Gypsy Fire said she knew Dylan spiritually in a previous life and first met him physically sometime after 1978 in a car park at a hotel in America "in a magical way" under a full moon.

She did not see Dylan again until she went with Dire Straits guitarist Mark Knopfler to a concert during his 1986 Australian tour.

Dylan invited her back-

stage after he saw her dancing, thus beginning a two-week love affair.

"Oh yeah, I made love with him, yeah sure. I won't say how many times because it was in all the bloody papers," she said.

Gypsy Fire said it did not matter the singer had not contacted her through the years, although she had sent him many letters.

"When someone is as famous as Bob Dylan he would only have contacted me, say, if I was as famous as Tina Turner or Elizabeth Taylor."

Gypsy Fire said she had no career and was now a "spiritual warrior" who read tarot cards and advised people on spiritual and creative matters.

Dylan-mad killer cured

By ANDREW DARBY,
Hobart

A man who killed his mother while believing that he was the son of God, and that Bob Dylan was God, has been confirmed cured of his delusion by going to the rock musician's concert.

The unusual test paid off for specialists treating Richard Dickenson, 25, imprisoned since 1987 when he was found not guilty of murder by reason of insanity.

Mr Dickenson believed Dylan was communicating with him through the album 'Desire'. He killed Gladys Amy Dickenson at her small farm in Melrose, northern Tasmania, by stamping on her after an argument over how loudly he was playing the record.

Earlier this year, a psychiatrist and two psychologists concluded that Mr Dickenson, after five years' therapy at Risdon prison, no longer believed he was receiving messages from Dylan.

"They had no way of testing that until Dylan came and they could bring him to the concert," the general manager of Corrective Services in

Tasmania, Mr Ben Marris, said.

Mr Dickenson bought a \$41 ticket for the 11 April concert at the Derwent Entertainment Centre, Hobart. A prison officer and a male nurse accompanying him had their tickets and overtime paid.

Dylan's performance in front of 5000 people drew calls for two encores. Despite that approval, local critics were unflattering, and some people left before the end.

But the psychiatrist reported to the Government: "From a medical point of view it was an excellent outcome. (Mr Dickenson) no longer believes that Dylan is God, and no longer has the delusion by which he believes that he is the son of God."

The Justice Minister, Mr Cornish, said he personally approved of the outing. But it is not expected to lead to a rapid discharge for Mr Dickenson.

"I have had no proposal for his early release, nor do I expect one," Mr Cornish said.

Mr Marris said the outing was appropriate in unusual circumstances. There were no plans for a regular program of prison outings to concerts.

DYLAN AT CLP—BUT WHICH DYLAN?

The inspired one, or the one who played the Warner in '91?

BY DR. ROCK

So, Bob Dylan plays tonight at Conneaut Lake Park, home of the Blue Streak. Let's hope he's not tangled up in a blue one, like last November, when he scowled before a sold-out, psyched-up crowd at the Warner Theater in Erie.

Dylan played a furious, bristling set that night; he rocked lean, mean, and hard. Unfortunately, he also tended to sing away from the mike a lot, so you could barely hear him. And, when you could hear him, you couldn't decipher anything through all the mumbling.

True Dylan disciples came away pleased; the legend had just stood before them, and he towered. Others — like the Doctor — were vaguely disappointed. Was it asking too much for *one* song to sound remotely like the recorded original? Dylan radically reworked everything to such an extent that "Gotta Serve Somebody" and "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right" — among others — were barely recognizable.

IF IT WERE ANYBODY ELSE, YOU MIGHT THINK TWICE about seeing him again. Don't. It's all right. This is Dylan — moody, enigmatic, sometimes inspired, sometimes not. Lately, though — keep them fingers crossed — he's been more inspired than not.

Joel Selvin of the San Francisco Chronicle lavished lengthy praise when Dylan played there in May. The expansive set list touched on all phases and moods of his extraordinary career, including "Tangled Up in Blue," "Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," "The Times They Are A-Changing," "Just Like a Woman," "Idiot Wind," "Desolation Row," "Love Minus Zero/No Limit," and a searing instrumental version of "Rainy Day Women" which featured two drummers.

Wrote Selvin: "Dylan seemed to be almost purposefully exposing a different facet of himself with every song, from hardened cynic to dewy-eyed sentimentalist. But what cemented it all together was his underlying conviction, a forceful performance that brought fresh meaning to songs

he must have sung thousands of times, the kind of emotional connection that comes only from reaching deep down in the well ... something his abundant detractors have been saying was impossible for him to achieve again after all these years.

"But there he was, defying all reasonable expectations, bringing the show to its final close, singing, as if he meant every single word, 'Blowin' in the Wind.'"

COLUMBIA REPORTS THERE'S NO NEW DYLAN DUE for immediate release. His last album was 1990's disappointing *Under the Red Sky*, which followed a near-classic, *Oh Mercy*. Dylan still plays nearly 125 dates a year. He toured New Zealand and Australia for the first time in six years back in April.

Some good news: Dylan's touring band is the same crack outfit which sizzled at the Warner. It features guitarist John Jackson, drummer Ian Wallace, and bassist Tony Garnier. They know Dylan's entire catalog. They follow his lead each night, ready to go wherever he takes them.

Acoustic duo Ric and Brian Butler will open the show at 5 p.m., followed by perpetually underrated Pittsburgh songwriter Joe Grushecky. Expect an acoustic set from Grushecky, whose career gets a boost on September 15. That's the day *Pumping Iron & Sweating Steel* — a best-of Iron City Houserockers' set — will be released.

If you're not working Friday, hang around the park after the show. The American Pie club will feature Stoney Jim and Freight Train Blues, while Rusted Root performs in Dreamland Ballroom. Both bands will play until 1 a.m. Camping is permitted in the park.

To create more of a festival atmosphere, several vendors today will offer merchandise such as tie-dyed t-shirts, beads, sketches, and other items.

BOB DYLAN, JOE GRUSHECKY, RIC AND BRIAN BUTLER will appear tonight at 5 p.m. at Conneaut Lake Park. Following the show, Stoney Jim and Freight Train Blues perform in the park's American Pie club, and Rusted Root plays in Dreamland Ballroom. Tickets are \$20, and include park admission, all rides, and the water park. Call (800) 828-9619.

Tickets also remain available for Conneaut Lake Park's remaining summer shows: *Staff's Up II with Jan and Dean* on Aug. 23; *REO Speedwagon and Southside Johnny and the Ashbury Jukes* on Aug. 30; and *Lynyrd Skynyrd/Delbert McClinton* on Sept. 7. Doodle-shot tickets — good for both REO and Skynyrd — are available for \$20, but must be purchased by Aug. 30.

Dylan hits homer at CLP

By JEANINE M. GATESMAN
BRAVO! EDITOR

A reporter once asked Joe DeMaggio how he could possibly play so consistently for so many years. His response? "I always thought that there was at least one person in the stands who had never seen me play and I didn't want to let him down."

If only Bob Dylan shared his philosophy.

I had never seen him play and he almost let me down at Conneaut Lake Park Thursday night.

But the last song was the last inning and Dylan hit a homer. After an hour and a half of loose playing and incoherent mumbling, Dylan, sporting a polka-dot shirt and black leather vest, waved off his band members, grab an acoustic and sang "Baby Blue."

It was Dylan at his finest. Dylan as it should be. Just a man with his raspy voice and his guitar. What would have made the moment perfect, would be a seat at a Greenwich Village bar where Dylan got his start in 1960.

Back then, Dylan still had an element of choirboy innocence, but now he looks desheveled and distracted.

Dylan showed his audience that above all else, he's human. He skips over words and his guitar playing at points wasn't much greater than what you might catch on a Saturday night at a local bar.

But he's more comfortable on stage, and at points there are fleeting glimmers of playfulness in his eyes. In his own inverted way, he seems to enjoy the interaction with the audience.

But with a career spanning 32 years and millions of fans still singing along, maybe he just doesn't care anymore. Maybe the enigmatic, low-profile stance he takes on stage is really just apathy.

Or maybe it's a strategy to heighten interest in his legend.

The point is, it doesn't matter. Dylan, at 51, is an icon, even though he continues to be a pop outsider. He evades the superstar hoopla. And there are few signs, as he enters his sixth decade, that he is surrendering his independence.

And that's part of his appeal. That fact that you can't understand him doesn't seem to bother his fans. If anyone else attempted to get on the stage and sing like Dylan they would no doubt be

booed off the platform.

But his legendary lyrics have a timeless, universal quality and if you are fortunate enough to know them going into the show, it adds a lot of meaning.

Don't depend on Dylan to sing clearly enough to understand. In fact I was beginning to wonder last night just when he was going to use up all that helium I was certain he sucked before coming on stage.

Dylan launched into a blistering if all but unintelligible version of "All Along the Watchtower" and by the end of the set hundreds moved closer to the edge of the stage and swayed to the music. Dylan looked down at us briefly and just kept playing. As usual, he said very little during the concert except an occasional "Thank you."

No introductions, no eye contact, no chit-chat.

But he received praise from the fans covering the lawn. He followed with other favorites such as "Peggy O," "Highway 61," "Everybody Must Get Stoned" and "Tangled up in Blue."

He wowed fans of all ages — from those baby boomers on nostalgia trips to the college-aged who weren't alive when "Blowin'

Bob Dylan performed Thursday night at Conneaut Lake Park



in the Wind" was recorded.

The show ended and there was a tremendous burst of applause when Dylan returned for a two-song encore. Then he bowed slightly toward the audience, turned abruptly and headed off stage.

But before he exited, he left the crowd with something his fans don't often get to see. The expressionless, somber and mellow Bob Dylan smiled.

And thousands of fans smiled right back.

JIM STEFANUCCI / Tribune

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

Who was that woman in the second row? Poor 'ol Bob. Rumor has it an American fan calling herself "Sara Dylan" was at a Bob Dylan concert at the Pafais this week. The mystery "Sara", using the name of his former wife, may or may not be among a few fans trekking around the world to every possible performance, able to pay close to \$50 a ticket here, plus travel and accommodation, undaunted by his famous line about trying to find out what price "you have to pay to get out of going through all these things twice". Dylan (right) in black suit, black shirt with white polka dots, and leather boots for the show we saw, has clearly lost none of his fire (no pun intended, Gipsy). He and a tight backing trio played close to 90 minutes of acoustic and electric rock, reinvigorating old hits, with a few surprises including "Watching the River Flow" and old folk song, "Little Moses". Just three songs among the 18 (including the three-song encore) were from his last two albums. There was little trademark Dylan banter in an intense, no-nonsense show starting with a fierce "All Along the Watchtower" and ending with an acoustic "Blowing in the Wind". Dylan is due to finish here with a sixth show on Tuesday.



Larry Schwartz

Music review

Bob Dylan, Neville Brothers, Joe Cocker, Michelle Shocked
Super Ex Grandstand, Saturday only

BY LYNN SAXBERG
Citizen staff writer

The Dylan doubters were wrong. To those of you who said Bob Dylan is washed-up, burnt out and can't sing, you were mistaken.

The legendary singer-songwriter was in fine form Saturday night at the Super Ex Grandstand. In fact, he rocked.

It wouldn't have spoiled the day if Dylan had an off night. Each band gave fantastic performances. It would have been satisfying to go home having seen Joe Cocker, The Neville Brothers and Michelle Shocked.

But, thankfully, the magic didn't end. Dylan came out blasting *Everybody Must Get Stoned* with all the power and intensity of the old days.

The powerstart continued with mindblowing versions of *All Along the Watchtower* and *Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again* coming soon after.

Dylan had a crack band backing him, including two drummers, two guitarists and a bassist who played electric and acoustic bass. He also took the stage alone for a hypnotizing acoustic session, maintaining the energy of the music the whole time.

His voice was confident, surprisingly clear and he focused intently on his microphone stand, moving only occasionally. Highlights of the set, which was approaching the two hour mark at deadline, were *The Times They Are A' Changing*, *All Along the Watchtower* and an electric *Maggie's Farm*.

It was one of the best days of music for Ottawa in a long time. The between-set changes were quick and the bands almost precisely on schedule.

BOB DYLAN

THE UNITED STATES MAY BE too vast a place for any one person to hold the title of greatest living songwriter. So let's be fair about it. In Times Square, it's Lou Reed. On Zuma Beach, it's Neil Young. Everywhere else, it's Bob Dylan.

Lord knows Dylan's played everywhere else, on a tour that's been going now for about three years—or maybe it's three decades—and shows no signs of abating. He plays the small cities and burbs most rock stars write off as not cost-effective and treats publicity for the plague it mostly is. He changes his band members and song arrangements without notice, and does not share billing with Miller Beer. As a consequence, his performances retain an aura of expectation and mystery that would be far beyond that of comparable legends, if there were any.

Dylan played seven nights in May at Hollywood's handsome old Pantages Theatre. There was no advance hype, which in Los Angeles is a rare and wonderful thing.

Dylan appeared in the familiar vest and hair and guitar that looked like it had been borrowed off a gypsy wagon, and lo, he was great. An ovation of greeting turned into one of thunderous recognition as he launched a torrid "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35," sending twin signals that the evening's repertoire

would draw generously from the classics and that Dylan, on this night at least, had the voice and the spirit to give them their due.

He also had the band, an amalgam of drummers Charlie Quintana and Ian Wallace, bassist Tony Garnier, lead guitarist John Jackson and pedal-steel guitar/mandolinist extraordinaire Bucky Baxter. The result was a hybrid that could burn like the dickens on "Maggie's Farm," or turn "Just Like a Woman" into an undulating country rock lament.

And he had the occasion. Two weeks before, riots and firebombings had torn Los Angeles apart, their causes and effects bringing back into focus moral issues that have always been at the core of Dylan's artistry. He framed those issues with the force and zeal of a prophet. "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" was no longer a lament for a '60s martyr, but the reflection of Rodney King. His withering rendition of "Ballad of a Thin Man" brought to mind a gaggle of contemporary candidates, while the meditative bluegrass sway given "The Times They Are A-Changin'" recognized the permanence of the conditions which spawn such sentiments.

For his second encore, Dylan returned alone and sang "Blowin' in the Wind." "How many years can a man turn his head and pretend that he just doesn't see? How many years can some people exist before they're allowed to be free?" Then he gave a little bow and left the stage.

—MARK ROWLAND

Big-bucks battle over \$50 treasure

TWO years ago, a couple who bought some cartons at a warehouse auction in Tennessee for \$50 realized the boxes were filled with potentially millions of dollars of rare recordings.

Brenda and Doug Cole learned that the tapes were master reels cut by Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, Johnny Cash, Tammy Wynette, Roy Orbison, Marty Robbins, and dozens of others. Three weeks ago, the Coles sold their treasure trove to Clark Enslin, owner of Bullet Records, a small New Jersey label. Now Enslin is in a legal rumble with heavyweight Sony Music. Sony says the tapes are stolen goods; Enslin says the tapes are legally his and that the Japanese-owned giant is trying to "hurt a little American company."

"There are cuts of Dylan doing 'Wild Thing' and 'Mr. Bojangles' that have never been heard, and I have four or five versions of 'Lay Lady Lay,'" says Enslin. "I have recordings Tammy Wynette made when she was about 16 years old... These are master, multi-track tapes that can be remixed that have never been on the market."

Dylan's meteoric magic lights up star-studded night at Super Ex

Should This Man Be Euthanized?

After years of lackluster performances and mediocre albums, it may be time to pull the plug on Bob Dylan. But Minnesota's most famous native still has his defenders.



THIS ISN'T A funeral notice and it's certainly not an epitaph. Lord help me if it sounds like the yellowed liner notes of the pre-compact disc age — hype disguised as thought. The figurative death of Bob Dylan — that's how this little collection of essays and character assassinations was explained to me — is just the sort of idea I'd expect to gain currency in the 1990s. I'll pass. It's true that the main tide of popular culture runs continuously out to sea with one aging generation after another, leaving the youth of any given epoch stranded on an ever wider, ever more desolate beach. Nobody under the age of 30 understands Bob Dylan, and frankly, I don't give a damn. I don't much care for Hammer or Jane's Addiction myself. Call me a fuddy-duddy from the century's second last generation, the dreaded baby boom, but I know a few things for sure. And one of them is that giants once walked and played their music among us. Elvis. Aretha. The Beatles. And the protean, world-altering Dylan. You can't name a single popular musician of the past 20 years whose work has been as important and is going to last in the way Bob

No
*Far From Dead,
Nowhere Near Forgotten*
BY WILLIAM SOUDER

**Nobody under
the age of 30
understands
Bob Dylan,
and frankly,
I don't give
a damn.**

Dylan's will. Bruce Springsteen? The Boss? Muzak to park by if you ask me. No one is going to get dewy-eyed in the next century over "Dancing in the Dark." But "Girl from the North Country" broke my heart at 14 and it always will. Maybe those of us past 40 aren't more interesting than people half our age, but we sure lived in more interesting times. Look on the bright side, kids. When you've got nothin' you've got nothin' to lose.

When Bob Dylan first went to New York in 1961 John Kennedy had been president of the United States for a month and the public was still digesting Dwight Eisenhower's warning that the nation had become a dangerously out-of-control "military industrial complex." By the end of the decade we'd choke on the words. Dylan, of course, was way out in front on the issue of war — but also on virtually everything else that counted to anybody coming of age then. My friends and I would lay around in

front of my dad's enormous, walnut-entombed hi-fi — the largest and most expensive piece of furniture in the house — listening to "Pretty Peggy O," "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right,"

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Yes
*Aging Rock Veterans:
The Case for
Euthanasia*
BY TAD SIMONS

**History has a
way of
humiliating
legends who
don't know
when to quit.**

OUR SOCIETY is at a perplexing crossroad. Since rock 'n' roll refuses to die, and so do some of its most famous practitioners, America has been besieged by aging rock stars who insist on touring the country as they once did, singing the songs that made them famous, trying to recapture the taste of their long gone glory. From the 1960s, the Rolling Stones, Crosby, Stills & Nash, the Beach Boys, The Grateful Dead, Eric Clapton, and three of the four Beatles are still at it. Many members of the rock generation of the 1970s, including Elton John, Rod Stewart, Peter Frampton, Genesis, and Yes, are already cashing in on their own nostalgia. Assuming a continuation of this unfortunate trend, Toto and Foreigner can't be far behind.

No question about it, the geezer comeback bandwagon is out of control.

In the old days, back when rock appreciation was neatly divided along generational lines, guitar-playing geezers were not a problem. Everybody accepted the fact that chord-banging

and crotch-pulling was a young person's act, like eating the worm and streaking. By definition, nobody over 40 played the guitar or ever sang anything more emphatic than a Christmas carol. Aging, health-conscious rockers are changing all that. Some people welcome the transition, but many of us who came of age in the infancy and adolescence of rock music are beginning to experience a creeping sense of shame and, yes, pity for rock 'n' rollers who are still nursing the same old licks into their 40s and 50s. It's not just that people over 40 lose a smidgen of dignity when they leap around on stage like aerobics instructors and sing about runaway-teenage passions while their own teenage kids sit at the wings, watching their parents fake orgasms in front of 50,000 people. Or that Spandex thighs make 40-year-old thighs look a little anemic. Or that most of the revolutionary songs of the era

now serve as background Muzak at Funo's, a fact of life that makes buying Ben and Jerry's ice cream seem like an act of anarchy.

No, the larger problem is that history has a

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Souder

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"Subterranean Homesick Blues," and "Blowin' in the Wind" and think, deeply, about the lives upon which we were embarked. It was a time of alienation, but alienation is at least an idea — a concept. Dylan's songs were an indictment but also an illumination of the sadly constricted suburban existence I was growing up in — and from which I longed to escape.

How does it feel to be on your own, with no direction home, like a complete unknown, like a Rolling Stone?

"But he can't sing," my mother protested. We shrugged. After a few years of this she discovered a book on existentialism in my room and began to have serious reservations about the direction my mental life was taking. I bought a 1957 Chevy and drove around listening to the radio. In 1967 I went away to college and before my freshman year ended I came back to the dorm after swimming practice one night to learn we were getting our butts kicked during a Vietnamese holiday called Tet. It was the same year somebody ran down the hall shouting "They shot the son of a bitch!" I assumed he meant Lyndon Johnson, but this was down South. He was talking about the assassination of Martin Luther King.

I don't know whether anything has weight with kids today, whether anything matters to them as much as it did to us. I doubt it. The times, they are a-changed. A friend of mine who's writing a book about a year inside a high school recently pointed out to me that the first nationally significant event today's teenagers remember is the Challenger explosion. It must be very hard these days to see anyone as larger than life. The culture — or lack of it — seems to reduce everything and everyone to microscopic proportions. How can anything truly matter when it's all just fodder for *People* magazine, MTV, *Entertainment Tonight*, and the gossip mongers who flourish everywhere? Popular idols are a short-term proposition in the 1990s. Who knows what they've got to say? They're destroyed in the gaping maws of public enrapturement before they can get a word in edgewise. Dylan is from another time, but he's far from dead, nowhere near forgotten. He was luckier. In the 1960s our great mistake and also

our great good fortune was to take everything, including ourselves, too seriously. Bob Dylan's talent will never diminish for us because we locked it away inside ourselves, took what he said to us irrevocably to heart. He was like a rare isotope — finite but owning such a long half-life that he would always be there for anybody who could still detect his exotic heat. Can you imagine how he'd be received today? As the man said, you don't have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.

I wasn't surprised at the scorn heaped on Dylan's performance of "Like a Rolling Stone" on David Letterman's 10th-anniversary show earlier this year — derisiveness is the tenor of the times. But I can tell you without a trace of self-consciousness that his appearance thrilled me. Maybe it was wishful thinking, maybe 30 years of carrying the greatest song ever recorded around in my mind clouded my thoughts, or maybe I was just elevated — as Dylan was himself — by the enthusiastic support he got from the band. But I thought he was great. This much is for sure: If you thought Dylan seemed all but struck by apoplexy as he struggled with the opening of his most memorable anthem, you don't really understand the song. It's about pain and loneliness and the strange, sometimes alien private world we each inhabit on this planet of souls groping to understand one another. And if the idea behind this song — the song that launched the counterculture, became the framing concept behind the alternative press, and lit the dawn of the golden age of rock 'n' roll — if it had been yours, how do you think you might have sounded on it after three decades? My mother taped the show and sent it to me as final proof that Bob Dylan cannot sing. Maybe she's right after all. It seems like more than singing to me.

I pulled out an old, worn copy of the 1965 album *Bringing It All Back Home* the other day. On the back of the dust jacket I found these words from another time and another place:

This Columbia high fidelity monaural recording is scientifically designed to play with the highest quality of reproduction on the phonograph of your choice, new or old. If you are the owner of a new stereophonic system, this record will play with even more brilliant true-to-life fidelity. In short, you can purchase this record with no fear of its becoming obsolete in the future.

Amen. ■



Simons

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way of humiliating legends who don't know when to quit, and those of us who care about how history perceives our childhood heroes hate to see them make fools of themselves in public. The decline of a legend is a horrible thing to watch, and the Bob Hope-ification of rock 'n' roll is more than we can bear.

The question is, what can possibly be done to keep our beloved aging superstars from becoming a snicker in the jokebook of history? A worthless relic in tomorrow's antique record store? A cowpatty in the cornfield of the future?

For the sake of history, musicology, generational peace, and overall avoidance of mass embarrassment, I respectfully suggest that the most humane thing to do with the rock legends of our time who are still living and playing well past their prime — to put them out of their own misery as well as that of their chagrined fans — is to euthanize them, one and all.

The executions would be painless. Those chosen to be euthanized would receive all kinds of perks to ensure their place in history, including 24-hour radio play on the most popular stations. The benefits to society would be incalculable. And let's face it, nothing beats a public execution for pure, unsullied spectacle.

Is euthanasia too draconian a solution? Perhaps. And to make the program work, of course, some pesky civil rights would have to be suspended. But we all know that death does wonders for an artist's reputation. And in the old days, drugs, alcohol, saturated fats, and a healthy instinct for disaster allowed many of our most beloved musical legends to euthanize themselves. Buddy Holly, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Harry Chapin, Jim Croce, John Lennon, and Elvis all had sense enough to kill themselves or be killed before their legendary status could deteriorate too far. Drastic social measures were unnecessary.

Not so today. A program of mass euthanasia for aging rock stars is the only way to make sure they quit when they should. Otherwise we're doomed to see Madonna in cone cups when she's 70.

But where to start? In the current generation of rockers who are too stubborn to die, there is no question that Bob Dylan should be the first to go. He has risen the highest and fallen the farthest, to the point where death is easily his next best career move. If the thought of euthanizing Dylan bothers you, remember that Bob's been asking for a merciful death in his songs for almost three decades. "The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind," is nothing if not a mournful plea to have his ashes tossed into the Minnesota breeze, and "I ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no more," doesn't

mean Bob is lazy, it just means that he's ready to buy the farm, and has been for some time.

This is not a harebrained scheme cooked up at the last minute just to stir up a little controversy because Bob Dylan happens to be in town

this week, offering a prime opportunity to see how such a measure might work. The social precedent for euthanizing aging rock 'n' rollers actually goes back to ancient Babylon, when Nebuchadnezzar decreed that all artists who had outlived their usefulness were to be burned at the stake in a ceremony honoring the artist's contribution to the kingdom. Artists yearned to be

sacrificed for the sake of art because the punishment for boring Nebuchadnezzar — being forced to recite the ancient equivalent of "Green Eggs and Ham" to the king's children all day every day until you were dead — was considered too hideous a fate to contemplate.

The ceremonies were conducted at night, when the flames looked coolest. Drums, reeds, and crude guitarlike instruments were used to whip the crowd into an ecstatic frenzy. At the stroke of midnight the sacrificial pyre was lit. As the flesh on the bottom of the chosen artists' feet began to sizzle and the flames engulfed their bodies whole, they typically let out a series of cathartic death screams that echoed throughout the city, signaling the beginning of a joyous celebration. Whereupon Nebuchadnezzar's people danced in the streets all night long and repeatedly engaged in spontaneous sexual intercourse right there on the ground in order to seed another generation of promising artists.

Vestiges of this ancient ritual can be detected in the fireworks, smoke, brightly colored lights, and screeching mayhem of modern rock concerts. By comparison, however, today's rock 'n' roll antics are a pathetic imitation of the sacrificial rituals enjoyed by Nebuchadnezzar and his people. And the post-concert sex is tame at best.

Sadly, today's aging rockers are trapped in an endless commercial purgatory. They wither in the spotlight but never die, slowly becoming pathetic parodies of their own greatness. People in Nebuchadnezzar's time couldn't get off on that, and neither can people today.

Anyone who cares about the place in history occupied by our most distinguished veteran rock stars should be willing to set aside his or her own selfish desires to see them perform in person long enough to realize that euthanizing them — sacrificing them for the sake of their own art — is the most generous, loving thing we, as their fans, could possibly do for them. Bob Dylan should lead the way, of course. After Bob's gone, maybe his fellow veteran rockers will see the light and follow. Anybody who's been knocking on heaven's door this long deserves to be released. ■

Bob's been asking for a merciful death in his songs for almost three decades.



Maybe

His Old Road is Rapidly Agin'

BY KEITH GOETZMAN

WHEN BOB DYLAN WENT ELECTRIC, I was just learning to walk. I didn't care one way or the other.

In third grade, under the direction of a pacifist music teacher, I sang "Blowin' in the Wind" but didn't know who wrote it or just how deeply it echoed the times. I thought all schoolkids in the world sang antiwar anthems like it.

During my adolescence, "Lay Lady Lay" and "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35" (a.k.a. "Everybody Must Get Stoned") blared out of my plastic, saucer-shaped AM radio. I learned Bob Dylan's name, but I thought his songs — both of them — were dumb.

By the time I went to college, I had gotten wind of Dylan's genius from hip friends and heard *Blood on the Tracks* thanks to a roommate. But then I saw the man play. He laid down such a godawful set on *Letterman* in 1984 that I promptly wrote him off

again.

And so it was, my acquaintance with Bob Dylan through the '60s, '70s, and early '80s — distant, almost nonexistent. He dwelled on the periphery of my pop consciousness, a much-lauded but, to me, irrelevant figure.

Now I'm a Bob Dylan fan.

What happened in the last few years? Well, I looked back to find the Bob Dylan I'd missed out on. I looked past the hang-dog eyes, the Mixmaster hair, the sourpuss scowl, the theological babbling, the mushmouthed talk-singing of the current Dylan, who's done his best to hide his former genius, and found that he was as great as I'd been told. Was, I stress. I learned quickly,

through good advice and surveys of the *Biograph* and *Bootleg* compilations, that great Dylan was early Dylan. I delved into his '60s canon, and, to borrow his words, it hit me like a freight train. I

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I'm still trying to figure out how the hell the Bob Dylan of yesterday became the Bob Dylan of today.

Goetzman

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soaked up the reconstituted blues, the hilarious hip raps about the Red Scare, the bone-deep love ballads, the stark morality lessons, the real-life stories of injustice, the rally cries to social change. I reveled in the rich imagery: "The hypnotic splattered mist was slowly lifting." "The cryin' rain like a trumpet sang." "To dance beneath the diamond sky with one hand hanging free." And I circulated among the cast of colorful characters: The one-eyed undertaker, the great granddaughter of Mr. Clean, the clown crying in the alley.

The artistic world of the young Bob Dylan was one as passionate and profound and gut-filled as any I've experienced, and it's one I'm still exploring. But I'm also still trying to figure out how the hell the Bob Dylan of yesterday became the Bob Dylan of today. As part of this effort, I've invested \$800 in a pair of tickets to one of the upcoming Orpheum concerts, despite my deep aversion to gambling.

I'd like to resolve some of the questions that have been burning in my belly since I really

discovered Dylan. How did the mouth that shot out the rapid-fire street poetics of "Subterranean Homesick Blues" turn into one that can barely enunciate a laid-back version of "Like a Rolling Stone"? How did the brilliant humanist who grieved for a murdered housemaid and a dead hobo become a hobnobber who shows up at every L.A. black-tie gala for over-the-hill rockers? How can the innovator who set the folk world on its ear by playing electric fail to see that the freshest thing he could do today would be to leave his session pros behind and play a fiery acoustic set?

Realistically, I expect to answer none of these burning questions, and I'm resigned to the fact that I may well go home from the concert disappointed. I can take solace in the fact that Dylan has never resorted to selling Honda scooters or Pepsi, nor allowed "Tangled Up in Blue" to become a jeans commercial. And I can appreciate that Dylan, as folksinger Billy Bragg told me last year in an interview, remains "his own man, working to his own agenda, and confusing the hell out of everybody." But just once in this decade, I wish he'd show us another side of Bob Dylan — the one that I've never seen. ■

No

His Right Leg is Still Worth Seeing

BY TOM SUROWICZ

THE LAST TIME I saw Bob Dylan, I didn't see Bob Dylan. That's

not a misprint, or a redundancy. Yours truly trucked over to RiverFest with approximately 40,000 close personal friends to get a glimpse of a legend, and all I ever spotted was his right leg. I'm pretty sure it was Dylan's right leg, but then again, it *may* have been guitarist G.E. Smith's right leg. In any case, it wasn't one of Tina Turner's legs, so it was damn hard to be positive.

You see, RiverFest was a cheap ticket, but the mob attendance made sightlines bloody awful. Unless you'd scored one of the \$50 prestige seating passes, and were guaranteed chair space — or arrived early enough to "grab some bench," like those Chicago White Sox announcers say — you heard Dylan, but never saw him. It was a very strange experience.

The sound was excellent, for an outdoor show. And the band played faultlessly, unlike some of the raggle-taggle, out-of-key, quintessentially embarrassing units that old Zimmie's brought to your home TV screens. Dylan even did a few new

songs that were curious and promising. Still, the whole affair seemed cold, flat, and a bit mechanical. Maybe it would have been a better show

if that right leg had a face, big schnozzola included, to go with it.

But then again, maybe it wouldn't. The time before I saw Bob Dylan at that intimate concert hall, the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome. He was a full football field away, but with binoculars looked very much like himself — i.e., like a hairy guy who'd just gotten out of bed. Dylan sounded like hell warmed over, however.

The Hibbing kid and his band of the evening, Tom Petty's Heartbreakers, opened their set inconspicuously with an old R&B chestnut, "Good Rockin' Tonight." The song was just about finished when it became identifiable. God, he's doing "Good Rockin' Tonight," I realized with a gasp. What a weird cover choice, and what a horrible rendition! The concert proceeded thusly.

Even Dylan's own tunes generally took 30 seconds or more to I.D. Notes were bouncing off walls and crashing into each other. Some

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Even at his head-scratching worst, the guy's entertaining, right?

Surowicz

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speakers delayed the sound by as much as two or three seconds, so songs were overlapping in different sections of the ballpark. At its worst, a lyric would come out something like this: *It's a hard/It's a rain/a hard/rain hard/gonna hard fall/rain fall*. We knew Bob's poetry was sometimes jumbled, but c'mon.

The sound got better about mid-show. Still, on a scale of 1 to 10, Dylan never passed 3, passed go, or passed muster. Most attendees left disgusted, depressed, and amused. The Metrodome soiree was more memorable than the RiverFest right leg, but for all the wrong reasons.

The first time I saw Bob Dylan was in the mid-'70s, in Philadelphia. He had just commenced his epic comeback tour with the Band, the tour that resulted in the double live album *Before the Flood*. The stage was decked out like somebody's living room. Martin Mull, still more of a musical novelty act than an actor back in those days, claimed loudly that of Bob had stolen the idea for a homey stage atmosphere from Martin Mull & His Musical Furniture. Hell, he probably had. The young Dylan had stolen liberally from old bluesmen, Woody Guthrie, Dave Van Ronk, and Len Chandler. And he'd stolen the hearts of sundry beautiful women. Our finest singer-poet and icon was back in gear, making brilliant music, so he was probably stealing again, too. Fans didn't love a light-fingered Dylan any less. They roared when he sang the line about even presidents having to stand naked sometimes — Dick Nixon had just taken the big fall. And they lit their matches and lighters at the end of the show, in a *sponta-*

neous tribute to a returning hero. That wasn't the rigorous behavior of any prior concerts, to my knowledge.

The Philly show lasted some three and a half hours, and included no dross. It was magical and intense, straight from the Band's opening number, "Stage Fright." Everybody knew the tune was about Bob, and everybody sensed that he'd overcome demons and was back with a vengeance and a brilliance. *Before the Flood* is a fine album, but I hardly ever listen to it. It's too hollow compared to that live experience — truly nonpareil. The phrase "you had to be there" never meant more.

Maybe that '70s flashback is destined to spoil all future Bob Dylan shows for me. Probably can't be topped, right? And no performer in our time is more erratic, or likely to disappoint. Don't even bring up Alex Chilton, 'cause he's just a musical footnote.

But hell, I'm still excited to see the old goat this week. Like Twins players, Dylan will be given every chance to succeed downtown. The Orpheum Theatre is stately, and it's got fine acoustics. Shows have been added due to popular demand, and Mr. Zimmerman's likely to have family in the house.

Will a hard rain fall on ticket buyers? Will Bob put on mascara, then numb and bark his way through badly bent oldies and post-*Empire Burlesque* loutsam? Let's hope not. But here's the bottom line. Even at his head-scratching worst, dribbling on about his pappy on some awards show, the guy's entertaining, right? When four CDs' worth of discarded bootleg material rocket up the charts, it's clear that Bob Dylan still matters. Glorious fool, unkempt genius, or candidate for the rest home? Any way you judge it, we haven't heard the last of Bob Dylan. ■

Thinkin' bout Bob Dylan blues

BY DALTON CORMIER
THUNDER BAY POST



It was the 4th of July in 1986 when I first saw Bob Dylan. Conditions were less than ideal for this initial live encounter. The concert was in the yawning bowl of Buffalo's Rich Stadium; Dylan played last following sets by the Grateful Dead and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

It was 36 degrees that afternoon, with the humidity typical to the Niagara Falls area, and the show had started at two in the afternoon. It was six before Dylan took the stage, backed by the Heartbreakers. It was a hot, tired and restless crowd that Dylan faced—the Dead hadn't been on their game (and when they are bad, they are horrid), and Petty had experienced some ear-splitting sound malfunctions that marred an otherwise impressive set.

And Bob, bless him, saved the concert. Sure, you could barely understand a word he sang or spoke but in recent years, Dylan fans have come to expect that. The Heartbreakers, with their let-it-simmer-until-it-explodes style, were the perfect complement on songs like "Ballad of a Thin Man", "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" and "Like a Rolling Stone". There were lots of smiles in the throng that left the stadium that night.

One subtle element that added to the concert was the seething, tough protest music chosen for the between-set tape—American Indian activist Jesse Ed Davis's *AKA Graffiti Man*. I'd recently read Dylan praising this little-known artist in a *Rolling Stone* interview, and upon hearing Davis sing understood that a torch was being passed; it was clear that Dylan might choose to be less overtly political in his recent work, but still appreciated the value of songs as angry and incendiary as Davis's "Rich Man's War" or "Elvis Presley in America".

It was a little overwhelming, being in the presence of greatness, of history, of an artist who inarguably changed the face of the world. I was feeling a little guilty, too—the night before at a campground outside Belleville on the way down to the show, the buddies and I had drunkenly held our own "bad Dylan" revue where we did shamelessly snotty imitations of Dylan, Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood doing "When the Ship Comes In" at Live

Aid ("mebbe we should be havin' a consit fuh the Ameggin fahmuth, so they can pay thuh muggages") and even recreated some of the cracked whining and psychotic harmonica on the early 80's eminently avoidable *Real Live* album.

We had a lot of nerve to say we were his friends, in other words, but there was really no malice intended. Dylan's like an eccentric genius uncle to many of us; sometimes much of what he does is downright puzzling, but if you sit by the campfire with him on a certain night and find out who he really is and what he's done, it's breathtaking.

I wish I had the exact quote, but I recall reading Bruce Springsteen say that when he first heard the snare-drum shot that starts off "Like a Rolling Stone" it was like a door in his mind that he didn't even know was there had been kicked wide open.

Had it not been for Dylan, the Beatles might still be playing "Good Golly Miss Molly" at golden-oldie concerts—they've all admitted that *Rubber Soul*, their first foray into folk and psychedelic stylings was "trying to do Dylan". Dylan also turned them on to drugs, for better (*Sergeant Pepper*) or for worse (*Plastic Ono Band*).

The same unquestionable influence goes for the Stones. Their late 60's-early 70's renaissance of *Beggar's Banquet*, *Let it Bleed*, *Sticky Fingers* and *Exile on Main Street* is unimaginable if not for Bob.

Since Dylan, if a rocker doesn't write his or her own songs they don't really count; since Dylan, if an artist attempts to send his fans to the library after Baudelaire, Burroughs or Dante it's no longer such a laughable conceit.

Since Dylan, we don't suspect the chameleon artist; if Bowie, Springsteen, Neil Young, Sting, or David Byrne choose to change their whole style and persona every couple of years, most of us say more power to them.

Dylan plugged in the protest movement, giving it a visceral "street"

edge that had been missing from the sweet sanctimony of The Weavers or Peter, Paul and Mary. His significance in what happened during the 60's could be argued to put him on a par with Thomas Paine or John Brown in terms of motivating popular dissent in America.

To look at his influence alone, though, is to overlook his skills as poet and songwriter. Maybe Dylan doesn't produce pearls at the awe-inspiring rate he used to, but every recent album has at least a few.

A recent experience brought it all back home. I rented a good little film, *Dogfight*, about the short romance of a young soldier on his way to Vietnam and a waitress caught up in the burgeoning folk music scene of 1962. Dylan's music served as the grand symbol of the growing split between these two American solitudes, and in one softly poetic passage, "Don't Think Twice (It's All Right)" was used in its entirety. It drove me back to my copy of *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits*; I'd never really appreciated what a beautiful song it is, and gorged myself on it (and the rest of the album) for the next few weeks.

Symbol, icon, clay-footed hero, whatever—Bob Dylan writes great songs. Bob Dylan made the world safe for a popular culture that dared go beyond television and the other limited visions of the prevailing power structure.

See you Thursday night, Bob.

Neverending Tour To Visit Thunder Bay

BY Angela Crispino
Thunder Bay Life

The news is out: Bob Dylan is booked for what Thunder Bayers dub 'The most important music event of the year.' His show is part of his Neverending Tour, which includes Toronto (Aug. 17, Hamilton Aug. 21, Ottawa Aug. 22 and Minneapolis from Aug. 29 to Sept. 3. Dylan has been on tour for the last five years, just finishing a tour in Europe.

*We are very fortunate
to have Mr. Dylan visit
Thunder Bay.*

Local concert promoter John Somers, a talent buyer has been working with International Creative Management in Los Angeles to bring this concert to Thunder Bay. 'It's been a pleasure dealing with the L.A. management', says Somers, 'We are very fortunate to have Mr. Dylan visit Thunder Bay.' Somers anticipates over 3000 tickets will be sold for the one night performance. He also hints that the opening act will be a 'high calibre artist', but nothing will be revealed until the 27.

It seems that the concert announcement took most people by surprise, true Dylan fans know that a concert by this eccentric musician is not to be missed. One of the 3000 ticket holders is Dylan-collector and local author Glen Dundas.

Dundas, also 51, an independant ac-



Dylan-collector Glen Dundas holding an original copy of "Tangled Up In Tapes Revisited", in his May Street office.

countant by day, prefers to be called an avid collector of Dylan memorabilia than a concert groupie. Dundas, explains that 'It's a hobby that's out of control,' began as any collector would, scouting out material that had been made or written by the legend. 'It was his Highway 61 album that really inspired Dundas.' 'I fell in love with the music,' Dundas shares that his Dylan collection includes over 1500 cassettes and about 300 video tapes, some are unreleased albums that he has obtained by a number of his Dylan friends. 'Collectors are quite strong-minded people', explains the Dylan fan, adding that he attends 15-20 Dylan concerts per year. Most recently on a two week vacation in California, Dundas attended 11 shows.

In 1990, Dundas published 'Tangled Up in Tapes Revisited', a 277 page discography. The detailed discography contains complete performance listings and release dates of commercial material. 'The discography is useful to survey Dylan's recording career quickly, determine dates and times', explains the author. The discography took about six months to complete, and over \$15,000 to publish. The book retails for \$30. Dundas collected several original photographs for the book, many of which were taken by friends.

Dundas, who has never actually met the eccentric musician, prefers to admire from afar.

Copies of Tangled Up in Tapes Revisited can be obtained by writing to 3-333 May Street North.

Hibbing Daily Tribune



Dylan delight

Trials and tribulations of covering Twin Cities concert

EDITORS NOTE: The following is a first-person story by Hibbing freelance writer Louise Lundin, who attended one in the series of five Bob Dylan concerts currently being held in the Twin Cities.

By LOUISE LUNDIN
MINNEAPOLIS — Sunday night. We walked along 9th Street toward the Orpheum Theatre.

A half-block down I saw the marquee: BOB DYLAN. LIVE. ON STAGE. Armed with my camera, press pass, and sheer optimism, I pondered questions I'd

put to Bob Dylan: "Do you think about coming back to Hibbing, singing in the high school auditorium one more time?" Or, "People Magazine" said you were 'spokesman for youth of the sixties.' What are your goals for the nineties, Mr. Dylan?"

I was going to capture Dylan on film. Live, on stage. I had a small tape recorder in my purse. One 90-minute cassette tape. Just for reference.

I got to the door. "Sorry," said a huge employee of Asia Security. "No cameras."

"But I'm with the Hibbing Daily Tribune."

"Sorry," said the big guy. Someone muttered from the side of his mouth. "These guys like their job a little too much." I took the hint. My camera went back to the car.

A moment later, inside the Orpheum, a guard from Sims Security stopped me.

"Let's see what's in the bag," he growled, pointing at my innocuous leather handbag. I unzipped it, tried to cover the tape recorder with my hand, letting him see the

wallet. "You can't take the tape recorder inside. Sorry."

I was ready to promise that I wouldn't use it. Did I see a flicker of challenge burning in his left eye? Okay. I gave him one battery, disabling my recorder. (I was sorry I hadn't been more clever. Concealing a camera would be pretty tough, but I could have tucked extra batteries in my shoes.)

Busted twice. Oh well. I was going to see and hear Dylan. LIVE.

Dylan appears in concert in Twin Cities

Continued from page 1

ON STAGE.

The crowd was antithetical to the audience I'd joined for Mozart's "Magic Flute" last spring. Companion Lynn said, "don't you feel the tension? This is the type of crowd I avoid for fear of mugging." Actually, I didn't. I sensed anticipation in the mass that looked mostly like Tom Cruise in "Born on the Fourth of July." Few faces under 35.

The house lights went down. Cheers, whistles, and sound like "a million hands clapping" filled the air.

Call it excitement. Or delirium. Call it memory loss. I don't know what Dylan sang as an opening number. I was sketching in the

dark, taking notes, hopefully on my notebook, not my purse.

I borrowed binoculars to check him out. Standing taut, wearing engineer boots, pale blue-tan plaid flannel shirt, leather vest, black jeans, Dylan looked tense and solemn. Feet planted, he sang "Positively Fourth Street." The crowd wanted more. As he proceeded through his repertoire, Dylan switched from electric to acoustic guitar and back again.

The band faded in the background while the spotlight found Dylan. Playing acoustic guitar, he strummed an intro which fans of the first order recognized in a second, "Girl of the North Country." "Well, if you're travlelin' in the north country fair,

Where the winds hit heavy on the borderline, Remember me to one who lives there. She once was a true love of mine."

Dylan pushed his harmonica to new heights with a jazzy windup to "Mr. Tambourine Man." Fans left their seats, rushing the stage. A bushy-haired guy on my right said he'd never seen so many bald spots in a crowd rush before.

I borrowed the binoculars again. Dylan looked fifty-some. Sensitive lines in his face. Few laugh lines. As he strummed his Martin guitar, I watched his hands. Almost thirty years ago those artistic hands penned the timeless words he began to sing: "Come mothers and fathers throughout the land, And don't

criticize what you can't understand. Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command. Your old road is rapidly agin' ... the times they are a-changin'."

Dylan sang current renditions of his classic songs. He delivered three encores to standing ovations. He mumbled thank you a couple times. No smiles, no interviews.

My companions and I left the Orpheum. The security guards were gone. I had no pictures, only scrambled notes and sketches. But I got to see Bob Dylan perform LIVE AND ON STAGE. My questions? They didn't matter. The answers were "Blowin' in the Wind."

ARTS

It is now 30 years since the most influential songwriter of the rock'n'roll era released his first record. In a new illustrated biography, **Richard Williams** traces Bob Dylan's path from Nowhere, Minnesota, to the epicentre of a musical and social revolution

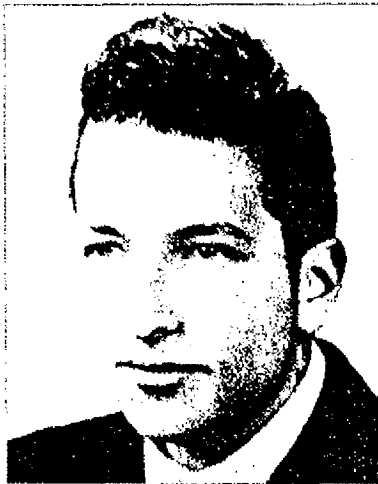
CHIMES OF FREEDOM

IT HAPPENED this way. First there was the radio, picking up messages from the twilight zone. Then the record-player, and the small pile of 45s, each one committed to memory. Then a home-made guitar, or somebody's cast-off, or perhaps an old banjo with half of a set of war-surplus headphones taped under the bridge and plugged into the valve radio to simulate a pick-up and amp. Then a friend with a real guitar, and another with a junk-shop snare drum.

And finally, one Saturday afternoon, in a teenage bedroom or an empty garage, the first faltering attempts to mimic those signals coming from some magic place: "Heartbreak Hotel", perhaps, or "Rock Island Line". And the electrifying power — the power that could be felt as the tremulous open E chord led falteringly to the A and the B in the three-chord matrix of rock'n'roll, and as the backbeat locked in to that pattern — never went away. In those simple elements there was more than just the structure of a song; they contained the outlines, the blueprint, of a new culture and a new world — something different, anyway, from what your parents had, and what they'd planned for you.

Robert Allen Zimmerman was born on 24 May 1941 in Duluth, northern Minnesota, the son of Abraham and Beatrice Zimmerman. Both parents were descended from east European Jews who had fled the rule of the tsars, in the classic pattern of pre-Great War emigration. Abe, too, had been born in Duluth, where his father worked first as a pedlar and then as a salesman in a shoe shop, slowly building a solid life for a family to which hard work became second nature. Abe, one of half a dozen children, was shining shoes and delivering newspapers from the age of seven, but by the time he married Beatty Stone, in 1934, he had a steady berth at the Duluth office of Standard Oil. They were a cautious couple: seven years of establishing themselves went by before the first of their two children was born.

Abe lost his Standard Oil job when the war ended and demand fell. The following year his second son, David, was born. David was only a few months old when Abe contracted polio. When he had recovered, more or less, the family decided on a move to Hibbing, an



High-school rebel: in the senior yearbook, 1959. Right: the young folk singer in 1962, when he had a small part in a BBC television play. No tape survives

iron-mining town up near the Canadian border that had been Beatty's home before her marriage. A community of about 17,000 people, mostly from eastern and southern Europe, the town had been ravaged first by lumbermen and then by open-cast mining. Now Abe Zimmerman joined two of his brothers in a furniture and electrical goods business, while the family moved in with Beatty's parents.

It is not hard to imagine Bob, a slight, quiet, round-faced boy, on the fringes of adolescent social life in this Iron Range town in the mid-Fifties. He was just into his teens when *The Blackboard Jungle* and *Rebel Without a Cause* came to town, casting their powerful spell on boys and girls for whom following their parents' example wasn't going to be enough. "Bob was different," Echo Helstrom, his first serious girlfriend, once said. "Mostly, he withdrew inside himself, a silent kind of rebellion." He liked cowboy stories, but there were pictures of James Dean on his bedroom walls.

It was the unselfish diligence and thrift of

millions of Abe and Beatty Zimmermans that made possible the rebellion of a Bob Dylan. Their success permitted him the luxury of dreams; their adherence to a narrow set of social conventions created something against which their son could react, something for him to test and push to breaking point. You can be a rebel without a cause, but you can't be a rebel without something to leave behind.

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ECHO followed him through the early months of 1958, as he fitted appearances with an ever-changing parade of bands (the Shadow Blasters, the Satin Tones and Elston Gunn and the Rock Boppers were some of the names they went under) around the increasingly unaluring requirements of Hibbing High School. But he was moving on, beginning to widen his horizons with weekend trips to Duluth and Minneapolis / St Paul, and the relationship suffered from the friction between her desire for a settled partnership and his visions of something over the horizon.

It was now that he began to try on other identities. With images of Dean and Presley and Little Richard flashing inside his head, a boyhood in the comfortable house of a store-owning Rotarian didn't seem half colourful enough to present to the world. So the gigs and the road trips and the conversations with strangers began to assume the quality of experiments in living. Every time he left Hibbing and travelled the 200 miles down Highway 61 to Minneapolis, he was adding a layer to his self-made myth. And these layers formed both a shield and a decoration, something to attract people, but also to keep them at a distance, lest they discover the mundane reality.

This, perhaps, is when the agony of stardom begins — with the first exaggeration, the first distortion, the first pure invention, the first attempt to put some distance between the private person and the public one. As essential as these elements may be, both in the development of an arresting image and, more subtly, in the creation of the art itself, in the end every last one becomes a burden — and the more there are, the more excruciating and inescapable is the agony. We can count with some accuracy what his self-invention has earned

Robert Allen Zimmerman, but we can only guess at what it has cost him.

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IN THE summer of 1960, Bob Dylan, as he now called himself, made what was probably the single most important discovery of his life: he found Woody Guthrie, the poet of the dustbowl. A friend called Dave Whitaker lent him a copy — itself borrowed from a university lecturer — of Guthrie's autobiography, *Bound for Glory*; instantly Dylan recognised someone from whom he could learn enough to flesh out the character he was creating. "I thought *Bound for Glory* was the first *On the Road*," he was to say, "and of course it changed my life like it changed everyone else's." Here he found an idol who told him that authority will screw you if it gets a chance, that only the poor are honest, and that all idols, including Guthrie and, eventually, Dylan, have feet of clay. Guthrie's songs — "Grand Coulee Dam", "Vigilante Man", "This Land is Your Land" — showed that a white man could write and sing the blues, everyone's blues, with an eloquence so direct that it was capable of shaping people's attitudes. "I was completely taken over by him," Dylan later said. "He was like a guide."

So complete was the conversion that Paul Nelson, a young journalist in Minneapolis who later became a respected rock critic, could write: "It took him about a week to become the finest interpreter I have yet heard of the songs of Woody Guthrie." Superficial elements of "Woodyness" — the work shirts, the Oklahoma background — became part of the younger man's persona, but it was Guthrie's more profound qualities that were permanently absorbed. Dylan's first known recording, an informal tape made in the autumn of 1960, contains several Guthrie tunes.

By this time, Guthrie was lying in a New Jersey hospital, half-way through a 15-year losing battle with Huntington's chorea. Bob was so moved by his new hero's plight that he got the hospital's number and tried to call. He began to fantasise about visiting Guthrie; and being Dylan, he talked about having already met him.

In his mind, Bob had already left town. "When I arrived in Minneapolis, it seemed like a big city," he was to say. "When I left, it was like some rural outpost that you see once from a passing train." Hitching rides, carrying only a suitcase and a guitar, he headed for his destiny — but not before stopping off in Hibbing to tell his folks what he was up to, and to pocket a little family subsidy.

First he went to Chicago, where he stayed with a folk singer he'd met in Denver, and then on to Madison, Wisconsin. But Greenwich Village seemed a long way away, and he grew discouraged. He looked for a lift home — and found himself instead with the offer of a ride to New York with another singer, Fred Underhill, as relief drivers for a couple of students.

And so, one late-January day in 1961, as the snow lay deep in the worst winter for 60 years, a car crossed the George Washington Bridge into Manhattan and stopped by the kerb. The door opened. Bob Dylan, 20 years old, had arrived in New York.

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WHAT HE did first was head for Greenwich Village. Here was the place of which Dinkytown, Minneapolis, was a pale copy. Here was the scene. At the Café Wha? on Bleecker Street, he talked his way in to see the manager, Manny Roth, and asked to play. That night, wearing the clothes he'd travelled in, he made his New York debut. A half-full house seems to have enjoyed it; when Roth asked the audience if anyone could put the new arrival up for the night, there was no shortage of offers.

The very next day, Dylan headed straight for the Greystone Park Hospital in New Jersey, the palsied Guthrie lay, barely able to

or talk. Dylan paid nervous homage, sang

a few of Guthrie's songs, and discovered that his hero was allowed out at weekends to visit the East Orange home of two long-time fans, Bob Gleason and his wife Sid. Dylan made for the house, where he was told that he'd be welcome to come back at the weekend.

Here, within hours of his arrival, was the entrée he needed. The Gleasons' had become a rendezvous for some of the most admired folk singers in the Guthrie tradition: Pete Seeger, Cisco Houston and Ramblin' Jack Elliott were regular visitors, taking part in informal sessions which the Gleasons taped, compiling what would become a remarkable archive.

Within a fortnight, Dylan had sent an ecstatic postcard to Dave Whitaker in Dinkytown, Minneapolis: "I know Woody... I know Woody and met him and saw him and sang to him. I know Woody — goddamn, Dylan."

A more profound response was to sit down and write his first substantial composition. In "Song to Woody", Dylan was making several important connections: to his dedicatee and the anti-establishment stance he represented; to the world of folk music (in a double gesture: Dylan set his original lyric for "Song to Woody" to a traditional tune which had been recycled by Guthrie as "1913 Massacre"); and to any people of his own age who might be listening. It doesn't undermine the seriousness of the song to suggest that "I'm a-leavin' tomorrow, but I could leave today" is the statement of a troubadour who wants the girls to know that this could be their only chance.

"Hard Times in New York Town" was another of the dozen or so songs he wrote in 1961, and no doubt there were bleak days that year. But it can't have been so bad.

Various couples he met at coffee-house hootenannies put him up in their apartments; they seem to have been older people, seduced by his youth and apparent helplessness and seeing themselves as surrogate parents. There was, too, no shortage of younger women who

listened to his stories and were anxious to get to know the young man who might or might not have been an orphan from Oklahoma, might or might not have played piano with Bobby Vee, might or might not have known Woody Guthrie personally since he was 13 years old, might or might not have spent years working in carnivals down Texas way, might or might not have picked up his bottleneck guitar technique from an old black singer in New Mexico.

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ON 30 September 1961, Dylan was booked to play harmonica on a record by Carolyn Hester, a singer signed by Columbia Records in an attempt to match the success of Joan Baez. A tall, lean, neatly dressed 50-year-old man with cropped grey hair was present when Dylan arrived. This was John Hammond, the legendary talent scout who had been instrumental in the careers of Count Basie, Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Charlie Christian and Benny Goodman. Unusually, Hammond had turned down Baez. Now he was trying to make amends.

Hammond didn't think Dylan's playing was particularly special, but he was intrigued by the boy's unusual presence. He invited Dylan to stop by Columbia's studios to show what he could do in his own right. In Hammond's own words: "As it turned out, he had songs of his own. One was enough. He sang 'Talking New York', a social commentary on life in Manhattan that knocked me out." Within a month — after being turned down by three folk labels — Dylan had a five-year contract with Columbia.

Hammond's immediate, intuitive response to Dylan was understandable. The child of a wealthy New York family, he had dropped out of Yale to pursue his interest in music. He had long been active in the civil rights movement, had made many field trips to the South in search of obscure musicians, and in 1938 presented Big Bill Broonzy, Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Count Basie at Carnegie Hall, in a concert titled "From Spirituals to Swing" — the first time such performers had appeared there.

Hammond was used to musicians and their ways, and he helped the impecunious Dylan out with occasional loans, a habit that would not come naturally to most record executives. He also arranged a publishing deal with Leeds Music, worth \$500 against royalties.

On 20 and 22 November, in two three-hour sessions, at a cost in studio time and magnetic tape of just \$402, Bob Dylan recorded the 13 songs that would make up his first album. He showed up at the Columbia studios on Seventh Avenue with his girlfriend, Suze Rotolo; Hammond, who was to produce the session, brought along Goddard Lieberson, president of Columbia and an eminent figure in classical music. For the head of a large record company to attend a novice signing's first session would be rare at any time; this was a remarkable augury.

Heeding Hammond's tips on microphone technique, Dylan moved fast through the sort of set he delivered in the clubs: the traditional "Pretty Peggy-O", Jesse Fuller's "You're No Good", Van Ronk's arrangement of "House of the Rising Sun" and two originals, "Talking New York" and "Song to Woody". Hammond was impressed by his sheer willingness to get on with it; no song needed more than five takes, some were completed in two.

He showed a gift for timing, building tension by holding a strumming pattern between lines or sustaining a note the way the blues singers did. As well as the raw tone of his voice, the often playful stresses and distortions he made were a shock to ears used to the clarity of conventional interpreters. And then there was his harmonica, which mixed the long, lonesome whistling notes of a Jimmy Reed with an eager chuffing all his own, and sometimes made a kind of two-part invention with his guitar. Playing the harmonica from a neck harness, he couldn't bend notes as powerfully as the blues-

men; this, too, helped make an original sound.

But the mood of the album was defined by three old blues songs dealing with a single subject: Blind Willie Johnson's "In My Time of Dyin'", Bukka White's "Fixin' to Die" and Blind Lemon Jefferson's "See that My Grave is Kept Clean". Here all playfulness dropped away, and a 20-year-old boy got under the skin of some of the most obsessed songs written in English. Dylan was paying homage to the bluesmen, but the ferocity of his parched young voice and the whining of his open-tuned guitar made something different of their fatalism; there was a

youthful foreboding that spoke directly to a generation that had grown up in a confusion of post-war consumer prosperity and the Cold War rhetoric of mutually assured destruction. The message, at this stage, was implicit: it was all in the angry desolation of the voice. It riveted Dylan's younger listeners from the moment they heard him.

Bob Dylan was released on 19 March 1962. It achieved an initial sale of about 5,000 copies, nowhere near enough to justify Hammond's faith, in the eyes of the accountants. To the younger executives Dylan became known as "Hammond's folly", the embodiment of the lapsed judgement of a man who had been bypassed by time and fashion.

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FOUR ALBUMS later, Dylan went back into the Columbia studio. There, on 15 June 1963, the man who seldom needed more than three takes devoted most of a session to a single song.

It had its seed in a little chord sequence he had tried on tour in Britain, on a backstage piano. It had been completed in a Woodstock cabin that he was sharing with Sara Lowndes, who was emerging as a significant factor in his life. Now the song had grown into something with four verses and a majestic chorus. "Like a Rolling Stone" was its title and Dylan and his producer, Tom Wilson, couldn't decide how to record it.

They had an assortment of musicians at their disposal: Bobby Gregg and Paul Griffin, the drummer and pianist who had played on Dylan's first

electric session earlier that year; a new bass guitarist, Harvey Brooks; and a pair of younger men — Mike Bloomfield, a 20-year-old prodigy from Chicago who played lead guitar with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and had no inhibitions about playing loud blues-rock licks; and Al Kooper, a 21-year-old New Yorker who'd been in and out of groups from the age of 15 and had written "This Diamond Ring", a No 1 single for Gary Lewis and the Playboys that January. Kooper, who played guitar and piano, had been invited along by Tom Wilson, but his function was unclear.

According to Dylan, the lyric of "Like a Rolling Stone" had emerged from 10 pages of "vomitic" writing. In the process, it had been distilled to perfection. Its venomous sarcasm, directed at a girl who may have been in part the poor little rich girl Edie Sedgwick, was unprecedented. The gallery of Fellini-esque characters — the mystery tramp, the clowns and jugglers, the diplomat, Napoleon in rags — were no longer the point of the song, but popularised instead a severely personal attack.

Dylan began at the piano, running through a version of the song in waltz time. Bloomfield joining in tentatively and the others listening to pick up the structure. Gradually it took shape, with Gregg and Brooks slipping from the original lunge, lurching into a calm, majestic 4/4, Griffin adding barrelhouse fills, Bloomfield anchoring the whole thing with ringing Telecaster flourishes. Finally, Dylan made the crucial decision. What he wanted was an organ to go with the piano.



The rock star: Dylan in 1966, after 'Like a Rolling Stone' had changed everything

Al Kooper, who had never played an organ before, was pressed into service on the studio's Hammond B3. He started to play a simple line, doing little more than punching out simple chords in the upper register, the whirling Leslie speaker making the notes hang and shiver in the air. Right there, Dylan heard what he'd been looking for. He stopped the take, and asked Wilson to turn the organ up. The next take was it. After Gregg's opening snare-drum shot, the first sound you hear is that of Kooper holding his shivering, silvery note.

At six and a quarter minutes, "Like a Rolling Stone" was twice the length that pop singles were supposed to be, and yet it carried not an ounce of superfluous weight. It sounds simple now, just seven instruments recorded live in a studio without any trickery, but on a first hearing its massiveness was what made the impact: it seemed like some great baroque cathedral of sound, a giant structure hung with all kinds of exotic decoration. A month later it was in the shops, on the radio, heading into history as a statement: Bob Dylan had finally discovered the way his music should sound.

◻ Adapted from *Dylan: A Man Called Alan* (Bloomsbury, £18.99). Dylan's 30 years with Columbia will be celebrated in an evening of his music at Madison Square Garden, New York, on 16 Oct

TOP 20 COLLECTABLE ARTISTS

POLL POSITION 9

BOB DYLAN

More than any artist, the market for Dylan collectables lives underground — in the world of unofficial tapes and bootlegs. While collectors of Prince or Madonna focus on worldwide picture sleeves or remixes, many Dylan aficionados concentrate on assembling shelves of concert recordings. Meanwhile, precious cassettes of studio out-takes circulate — to the extent that Dylan and CBS were finally pushed into issuing a three-CD rarities set, "The Bootleg Series", last year.

Back in the legal world, there are certain legendary items that fetch £1,000+ —



A 1966 acetate of Dylan's "Blonde On Blonde" album track, "Rainy Day Women".

original U.S. copies of the "Freewheelin'" LP with a different track listing, or the rejected "Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window"

accidentally issued as a single in California for a few days in 1965.

The most sought-after U.K. issues are the mono mixes of Dylan's 1965/66 albums, "Bringing It All Back Home", "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Blonde On Blonde". Any picture sleeve releases from this period are prized, though only one — "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat" — appeared here. And several Dylan singles have non-LP B-sides — notably "I Want You", "Watching The River Flow", "Precious Angel" and "Heart Of Mine".

Also watch out for albums including live Dylan tracks from the 1963 Newport Folk Festival, plus early guest appearances on albums by Victoria Spivey, Dick Farina and Harry Belafonte.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING: "Biograph" and "The Bootleg Series" are box-set retrospectives with no duplications. Of the original albums, it's tough to single out a handful, but "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan", "Highway 61 Revisited", "The Basement Tapes", "Blood On The Tracks" and "Oh Mercy" would be a good starting point.

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

20 August 1992

'COLUMBIA RECORDS CELEBRATES THE MUSIC OF BOB DYLAN'

Live concert event set for October 16, 1992 at Madison Square Garden

In 1962, Bob Dylan began a revolutionary journey that changed the face of popular music. He brought to rock 'n roll the traditions of poetry, protest and personal confession.

As 1992 marks the 30th anniversary of the release of Bob Dylan's debut album on Columbia Records, the world's leading contemporary recording artists will gather on October 16, 1992 at New York's Madison Square Garden to celebrate his music.

Presented by Columbia, Bob Dylan's record company for the past 30 years, the event, which will be staged live in front of an audience of more than 20,000 fans, will be broadcast on television and radio around the world. In the United States this historic event will be broadcast live in a Pay-Per-View special from World Concert Network.

An announcement of artists appearing at this special celebration will be forthcoming in mid-September.

- ends -

ROCK TALK

LISA
ROBINSON

THERE are some tickets being saved for the night Bob Dylan brings it all back home again — his 30th Anniversary Tribute Concert at Madison Square Garden on Oct. 16, but the ducats are \$150 per, and they're being held for media and music industry types.

Included in that high-roller price is four hours of catering provided by the Hard Rock Cafe and a "backstage pass." (Now, anyone involved with rock knows that there's backstage, and then there's *backstage*; it's highly unlikely that Bob Dylan, Tom Petty, George Harrison, Eric Clapton, et al, will be hanging out in this particular hospitality area.)

The rest of the tickets for this once in a lifetime event — priced at \$35, \$50 and \$80 — all sold out in 70 minutes.

For those of you wondering, it's not a benefit for anything, the tickets are high because the show — according to spokesmen for Radio Vision International who will produce the event — is "costly to produce." All the high-end talent set to appear (announced so far are Dylan, Clapton, Petty, Harrison, Neil Young, John Mellencamp and Sinead O'Connor) needs elaborate crew, sound and lights, and the whole deal is a one-shot, not a part of a major tour.

Of course, for those who want, or can only afford, to see it on TV, the live pay-per-view will cost \$19.98, and is available to 22 million homes. If you're interested, call your cable company.

There are no plans for a live video or record; but dare I say that there might be a few VCRs going that night? (Just for the record, the fancy seats surely will be filled by older, more well-heeled types, but this is not the most expensive concert ticket in recent memory; industry seats at the MTV awards were \$150, but seats were available to fans for \$10, \$20 and \$40; the Rolling Stones' "Steel Wheels" pay-per-view concert was a regularly scheduled Atlantic City show and seats were available to fans at \$38.50 with the high roller seats around \$150 and \$250. And, to put this in perspective, ringside seats at a major fight can range from \$800 to \$1500.)

The times they are a-changin' all right; when Bob Dylan first performed at Gerde's Folk City three decades ago, his performance was part of a "hootenanny" night, and admission was free.

The Dylan tribute: What's up, Bob?

WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHO MR. JONES IS. SO we probably shouldn't be surprised that the Oct. 16 Bob Dylan tribute at the Garden remains shrouded in mystery.

Like, will it be as great as it sounds? And exactly why is he doing it?

So far, the lineup includes Dylan, George Harrison, Tom Petty, Eric Clapton, Neil Young, Willie Nelson, Sinead O'Connor and John Mellencamp. The band will be Steve Cropper, Booker T., Duck Dunn and Jim Keltner, with G.E. Smith as music director.

Ringo Starr is semi-expected, and the L.A. Times says Bruce Springsteen will fly in from Vancouver, where he plays Oct. 15. It's hard to believe Robbie Robertson and The Band weren't invited.

The live show will last four hours; pay-per-view will telecast three. WNEW-FM will simulcast and a home video and live album are likely.

The format calls for guests to solo, followed by a Dylan segment and a mass finale. The mix-and-match parts, like a Wilburys segment and duets, are being worked out.

Dylan fans obviously hope the star is at the top of his game, the same way Chuck Berry was pushed to his peak by Keith Richards at Chuck's 1986 tribute show. On the other hand, this is Dylan, and he could just as easily take a complete left turn, as he did at the Grammys in 1991.

Which brings us to that other question: What exactly is this show about?

"If it's just a showbiz event to make money, that's the kind of thing Dylan has always seemed to be against," says Steve Joyce, a Dylan fan from New York. "If it's a tribute to his music, where



A MYSTERY: Bob Dylan

are Dave Van Ronk and his early influences? Where's Bruce Langhorne? Where's Roger McGuinn? Where did Sinead O'Connor come from?"

Valid questions, with no easy answers. This is billed as a 30th anniversary, but there's no milestone in sight; 30 years ago, Dylan was recording his second album, playing Town Hall and wishing Suze Rotolo would get back from Europe ("Boots of Spanish Leather").

Ask who conceived this show and the pay-per-view people say they don't know. Columbia says it isn't sure. There's no charity tie.

So we're looking, basically, at a manufactured event — which is (1) odd for Dylan, but (2) common in showbiz and doesn't mean it can't be entertaining. What it does explain is the cast. Because pay-per-view is desperate to sell something besides *Wrestlemania*, it needs glamorous names, i.e. Sinead rather than Joan Baez or Carolyn Hester. And even then, suggests Bob Grossweiner of *Performance* magazine, the show is no instant goldmine: Despite the \$30-\$150 tickets and \$20 pay-per-view fee, it might not make much profit before a home video comes out.

So could a Baez sneak in? Don't know, Columbia says.

In any case, says Mick McCuiston, editor of the Dylan fanzine "Look Back," most fans have yet another question: Can I get tickets?

The answer is, sure. Broker prices start at \$70 for nose-bleed seats and go up to \$600 for front row. Columbia estimates, incidentally, that "about 17,000" of the 19,000 seats available were sold to the public through Ticketmaster.

"People are flying in from overseas," says McCuiston — not only for the stars, but because they fear this could be a temporary "Last Waltz."

But Columbia says a new Dylan album will be out soon. He recently recorded with, among others, David Bromberg.

So something is happening here. Like Mr. Jones, we're just not sure what it is.

★ **BOB DYLAN** is threatening to sue the San Francisco-Oakland transit system for using the slogan *The Times They Are A-Changing* to increase awareness of schedule changes. Meanwhile, Dylan recently completed a five-night stand in his hometown of Minneapolis at the smallest venue he's played there since 1960 — the 2,800-seat Orpheum Theatre. As a warm welcome, a local music weekly ran a cover story asking whether euthanasia should be employed on rock immortals.

★ **BITTER END**, the legendary New York folk club which played host to the early gigs of Joni Mitchell, Neil Young and Bob Dylan, is under threat of closure. The club was cited for failing to display a floor plan, and a city judge subsequently allowed owners of the building to evict manager Paul Colby. However, Colby plans to fight the eviction notice, and is currently planning a series of benefit concerts to raise money for legal fees.

■ **BOB DYLAN** was screening the long unavailable documentary *Eat The Document* in the foyer at his shows in California during May and June. Dylan, who owns copyright on the movie, made by DA Pennebaker and Howard Alk, has long prevented it being given an official release. However there is no news that the widely bootlegged film will be given a legit release.

LAURA KALPAKIAN'S "Graced Land" is about a middle-aged lady who loves the best of what Elvis Presley stood for. She has a thing for his music, too. She's on welfare, but she doesn't let that define her life. The pace is fast, the plot crisp, the writing a delight.

To troop off to the beach with "Troubadours of the Folk Era," a Rhino Records collection of folk music mostly from the '60s, sounds like a desperate attempt to recapture some long-lost summer of the dim past. Actually, these tracks are perfect summer music — catchy, melodic, black and white, serious and light. We're talking Woody Guthrie, Judy Collins and Tom Rush. Ramblin' Jack Elliott does the definitive "San Francisco Bay Blues." Even Dylan peeks through the door, playing a nice harmonica on Carolyn Hester's "I'll Fly Away."

— David Hinckley

Bob Dylan to perform

Legendary rocker will visit during LHU Homecoming

By MIKE FLANAGAN of The Express

LOCK HAVEN — Rock legend Bob Dylan will be singing and playing Oct. 10 as part of Lock Haven University's Homecoming weekend.

LHU Student Cooperative Council President Steve Madrak said on Monday afternoon that the date is definite for Mr. Dylan's 8 p.m. visit to Thomas Field House.

"The contract is being signed right now," he said.

Mr. Dylan is expected to perform for up to three hours, as he preps for a performance a week later at Madison Square Garden in New York City in a pay-per-view event.

"It was basically a last-minute thing," said Mr. Madrak. "We were hoping to get him after Madison Square Garden, but he wanted the week before. That's OK with us,

especially since it's Homecoming."

Tickets will be available this Thursday or Friday for LHU students at the PUB bookstore at a cost of \$12.50. The general public will have to pay \$20 a ticket, and the non-students tickets will be available beginning next Monday, also at the PUB bookstore.

Mr. Dylan, whose hits over the years have included "Like a Rolling Stone," turned 50 years old earlier this year. His appeal to both younger and older people is expected to sell out the Field House, which can only hold up to 3,000 people for a concert due to fire and safety reasons.

In the past, concerts at LHU have usually flopped for one reason or another. The list could go on and on — Jefferson Starship, Meat Loaf, Greg Kihn, etc.

But Mr. Madrak, who wouldn't say how much the SCC is putting up for

the event, said he doesn't expect that to happen with this year's concert where a big name has been snagged.

"What we did this year was that we went for somebody big," he said. "In the past years, they have been too conservative. They went for smaller names just so they didn't spend a lot of money and get too risky."

"Well, Bob Dylan is a big name. It is a risk . . . he costs a lot of money, but hopefully, we'll get that all back. Because Bob Dylan is such an expensive performer, we basically can't make any money on it. We could make a couple thousand if it was sold out, depending on the split between students and non-student ticket sales."

"The point isn't to make money. It's for a concert for the students. I think Bob Dylan is a big enough name . . . it's definitely the biggest name Lock Haven University has ever had here. He's a legend."

Bob Dylan hits the coffee-table

A BOB DYLAN book for the coffee table? And why not? Though Dylan is invariably hailed as the most cerebral of rock stars, for many years he was also the most photogenic. Today he is an unkempt, 50-something sporting a look best described as Mad Gypsy.

But back in the swinging Sixties Dylan was very much the thinking girl's crumpet. As the lonesome young hobo walking in Woody Guthrie's footsteps or as a hip, amphetamine-fueled Hamlet hiding behind shades, no pop star was ever lovelier than the young Dylan.

Dylan — A Man Called Alias is a lavishly, almost lusciously illustrated Dylan book with acres of gorgeous black and white photographs. More than any of the mountain of Dylan books already out there, it recalls Norman Mailer's book on Marilyn Monroe, truly beautiful photographs accompanied by a lyrical, intelligent text.

Richard Williams is not quite in Storming Norman's

Tony Parsons on a vividly written and lavishly illustrated life of the photogenic genius of rock

Dylan: A Man Called Alias

by Richard Williams
Bloomsbury, £18.99

league — hell, who is? — but he is a fine journalist whose vivid portrait of Dylan at the height of his powers, a rhapsody about "the hallucinatory beauty of this nervy, blade-thin figure with a corona of curls, bathed in a strange unearthly light", is better than anything I have ever read on the man.

And Williams loves all the right songs. What makes this required reading for any Bobaholic is that there are 30 years of Dylan-watching in this book. Williams is excellent on the disparate forces that gave Dylan his strange magic — a unique brew of Little Richard, Hank Williams, Elvis, Woody Guthrie and later the French Symbolists and Beat poets. Behold the Rimbaud of rock and roll!

Elvis liberated rock and roll's body but Dylan liberated the mind and, as Williams points out, everything from the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* to Springsteen's *Born In The USA* would have been unthinkable without Dylan.

"This is Bob Dylan's story — it is not his life", says Williams in his introduction. It is an oft-told story with a lot of familiar landmarks. The child-faced troubadour sleeping on floors in Greenwich Village. The hip rock star hiding behind shades



Dylan: Hallucinatory

and eating speed like M&Ms. The motorbike crash. The messy break-up with Sara. The conversion to Christianity.

But Dylan — A Man Called Alias (Alias was the character Dylan played in Sam Peckinpah's *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*) brings enough originality and fresh material to the tale to make the text a gripping read. It was news to me, for example, that someone threw a silver crucifix on stage to Dylan a few days before he discovered Christ. He picked it up, put it

in his pocket and a few days later met his maker.

God knows Dylan has recorded some rubbish over the years but there has been much that has been memorable and a good few hours of music — albums such as *Blonde On Blonde*, *Highway 61 Revisited*, *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Blood On The Tracks*, songs like *Positively Fourth Street* and *Blind Willie McTell* — that are simply unforgettable, among the greatest rock music ever made. Williams is a sagacious curator of this erratic back catalogue. He is a fan but he knows tripe when he sees it. And — apart from 1989's album *Oh Mercy* — Dylan fans have seen a veritable convoy of tripe over the last 10 years or so.

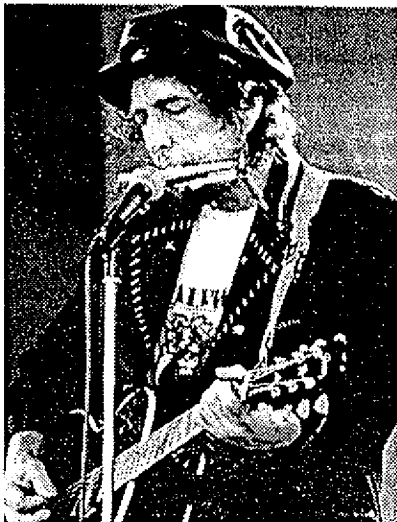
But he remains Dylan. Only Presley's ghost looms larger. "Dylan wrote songs that touch places people have never sung about before," says Jerry Garcia. "Wherever great rock music is made," says Bruce Springsteen, "there is the shadow of Bob Dylan."

There are enough anecdotes here to glimpse the private Dylan — Bob rolling the Beatles their very first joints, his wife coming down to breakfast to find another woman at the table — but there is a lack of real sleaze. Perhaps there is no place for that nasty stuff on a coffee table.

But Dylan — A Man Called Alias is an intelligent, hugely entertaining enterprise. Bobaholics will read the text in one go while lingering on the beautiful photographs for a lifetime.



NORMAN STORMS DYLAN SUPERGIG



30 YEARS ON: Bob was discovered by producer John Hammond who later spotted Springsteen

Hero's night of stars

GULF WAR supremo General Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf is the star guest at next Friday's massive concert tribute to Bob Dylan.

Dylan himself, Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Neil Young, Tom Petty and Sinéad O'Connor headline the gig to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Dylan's first album.

Other top names—including Bruce Springsteen and Aretha Franklin—are also being lined up for guest appearances.

Schwarzkopf, the mastermind of 1991's Operation Desert Storm has been Blowing In The Wind for years as a Freewheelin' Dylan fan.

"I still love Bob Dylan," he said. "I used to have an autoharp (a type of zither with a mechanical device to allow the easy playing of chords) and I'd sneak off into the depths of my basement and sing The Times They Are A-Changing."

The 57-year-old general even likes Dylan's lefty Sixties peace anthems "except the ones that depict the military as a bunch of arch, right-wing conservatives with jack boots and crew cuts which we are not." The show at New York's Madison Square Garden will be



NORMAN: Basement songs

WIN LEGEND'S GREATEST HITS

★ I'VE got all Dylan's official albums on 30 CDs up for grabs. They're worth £300 but someone's going to get 'em free—together with a CD of his new album Good As I Been To You and a copy of the new Dylan biography A Man Called Alias.

It's written by Richard Williams and published by Bloomsbury at £18.99.

★ Twenty-five runners-up will each get a CD of the new al-

bum and a copy of Williams's new book.

To win, just complete the name of the classic Dylan album John Wesley

★ Send your answers, plus your name and address, on postcards only to Dylan, PO Box 486, News of the World, 1 Virginia Street, London E1 9SD.

First 26 entries out of my postbag after the closing date of October 19 will win.

Channel 4 will screen the gig as a Christmas special on December 21.

Stars have been sworn to secrecy over which Dylan numbers they will perform with an all-star band comprising Booker T, Steve Cropper, Jim Keltner and Duck Dunn.

Dylan, Harrison and Petty may also be joined by Jeff Lynne for the first live performance by the Traveling Wilburys.

Meanwhile Dylan, 51, has completed work on his first acoustic album since Another Side Of Bob Dylan in 1964.

Titled Good As I Been To You, it contains mainly traditional songs and is scheduled for release on November 2.

COVERED WITH GLORY

DYLAN songs have been recorded by some of the giants of pop.

These are his personal Top 10 cover versions:

1. All Along The Watchtower (Jimi Hendrix)
2. The Mighty Quinn (Manfred Mann)
3. Mr Tambourine Man (The Byrds)
4. Knockin' On Heaven's Door (Guns N' Roses)
5. With God On Our Side (The Neville Brothers)
6. A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall (Bryan Ferry)
7. It's All Over Now, Baby Blue (Them)
8. Blowin' In The Wind (Stevie Wonder)
9. Just Like A Woman (Joe Cocker)
10. Only A Hobo (Rod Stewart).



10 FACTS ABOUT MR ROBERT ZIMMERMAN

① DYLAN was born Robert Allan Zimmerman in Duluth, Minnesota, on May 24, 1941. On June 5, 1959, he left Hibbing High School "to follow Little Richard".

② In a change of direction, he began playing local folk clubs while at university. After reading Woody Guthrie's Bound For Glory, he changed his name (he was also a fan of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas).

③ His first recording was as harmonica player on Harry Belafonte's Midnight

Special album in April 1961.

④ On a brief visit to London on January 12, 1963, he played a folk singer in the BBC radio play The Madhouse On Castle Street.

⑤ By 1964, the pressure of his hits—especially the protest anthem The Times They Are A-Changing—drove him to become a recluse.

⑥ Shortly after his 25th birthday in 1966, he broke his neck in a motorcycle accident.

⑦ In 1973 he received advances of 1 million dollars per album when re-signing to CBS records after a period on Asylum Records.

⑧ In 1985 he revealed his own heroes were Tom Waits, John Prine and Leonard Cohen.

⑨ He once had an American journalist arrested—for rummaging through his dustbin.

⑩ Bob Dylan has never had a Number One single hit in either Britain or the USA.

Mark Carter

It seems as though I have much to respond to in **Homer 6**, so you'll forgive me if I ramble on at some length. Hopefully, you'll find the space to reproduce this in full.

Firstly, and, to my mind, most importantly, your editorial, which revealed a certain degree of doubt in your mind. As you wrote in your letter to me; "I'm beginning to doubt if it is worth all the effort". Well, I can't provide you an easy answer, it's not for me to say - you're the only one who knows whether the rewards justify all the considerable effort. However, consider the feedback that you receive, and whether people seem satisfied - I'm sure you'll find that most of them are. There is a definite need for a fanzine which gives the "average" Dylan fan a platform to voice his opinions, and you're the only one (in Britain, at least) that fulfils that need. The rapport building up between many of the contributors, plus the healthy lack of elitism, is surely something to be treasured.

Freewheelin' will not go public - this is an idea that was discussed and rejected a couple of years ago, just before **Homer** began, so the need for **Homer** is greater than you have perhaps estimated. The idea, certainly between JRS and myself, was to keep **Freewheelin'** as it is and to give you as much help and support as you need. Which brings me on to my second point.

I feel somewhat responsible for your current turmoil, seeing as how my "open letter" appeared in **Isis** just as you were about to print it in **Homer**. I originally wrote it for **Freewheelin'**, hoping to not only air my personal concerns, but also to see how other people felt. However, the last thing I wanted to do was to help fuel the theory that each fanzine is determined to outdo the other. To be fair to you, you've never shown any signs of wishing to practice "one-upmanship", or passing any derogatory remarks about other publications (except in defence), but such things do go on, as we both know, and it was never my intention to add to all the hassle. It would be nice if the various "editors" talked to one another more, but that's not likely to happen. A sad state of affairs, but there you have it.

Your comments that I have fallen "into the trap of self-importance" may well be true. However, I still don't feel that it's asking too much that Dylan acknowledges his audience - as he has been doing again since October 1991, I hastily add. It's our bums on seats that he needs after all, if only to continue with the lifestyle that he so obviously craves nowadays. While we shouldn't expect (or even want) him to drop to his knees in gratitude, I think the theory that Dylan is far too important to have to do anything other than turn up on-stage is somewhat blinkered, and belongs back in the era when he was placed upon a pedestal where he could do no wrong. True, this reply may be as "indelicate" as my previous article, but that's just the way that I am, hopefully you can read between the lines! There is a healthy need to agree and disagree within the pages of **Homer**, so don't be downhearted over a few veiled remarks or actions (or deadline pressures), keep on keepin' on if it's what you really want to do.

Secondly, Jim Heppell's excellent article on **Angelina** and **Foot Of Pride** has reminded me that I've been very naughty in not replying to him personally, something I hope to have remedied by the time you print this. I'd still love to write a joint article with him, if he's willing and if we can find a suitable subject. Jim is certainly a very talented writer, and possibly just what is needed to iron out my rough edges. The main benefit of reading anybody's theories (and this again reflects upon the importance of **Homer**) is that it surely sends us back to the original song with perhaps some fresh ideas to juggle with. Which is the whole point anyway, right?

Mike Jackson's excitable reply to my **In The Final Battle He Won The War** article is a case in point. He obviously took great exception to the fact that I have suggested that Dylan is not always god-like, which is his prerogative, but to lump me in with the hacks who ritually slag Dylan off in the "popular" press is taking things a bit too far. So I'd like to take the time to reply to him, if he's reading.

Mike - I may call you Mike, may I? - you've got me all wrong. I love Dylan as much as you do, and I venomously defend him to non-believers as much as you have to me. Andy's comment that we have to base our criticism mainly on the strength of audio and video tapes is correct, and, as I said, I feel that I've heard and watched enough good shows to know a bad one when I hear it. Obviously, I can't prove this to you, but

my article only reflected my opinions, and you'll have to take my word for it. Back in 1989, I wrote a piece for **Freewheelin'** on the '89 shows and how they peaked (for me) at Birmingham, declined drastically during the Summer and then peaked again during the Autumn after the release of **Oh Mercy** when Dylan had some new material to perform. I did see him live that year, but not in the States, yet you could hear the gigs kick up a gear after the first couple of numbers during the Oct/Nov shows, and I knew that Dylan was riding high again after that Summer's tour of tedious Greatest Hits shows and extended instrumental jams. Similarly, although I attended several of the 1990 Hammersmith shows, the evidence on video and audio would have been enough to convince me that Dylan was at the peak of his performing powers even if I hadn't been there at all.

Yes, I have listened to the early '91 tapes and watched several videos and, yes, I will concede that Dylan was enjoying himself on-stage but I still consider them to be monumentally poor shows. I've watched Utrecht (31/1/91) on video once or twice, and it's a truly horrific experience. Dylan looks ill and totally disinterested with the show. To me, he appeared to be on a more terrifying death trip there than at any time I can think of in 1966. Luckily, he appears to have survived.

I notice you didn't pick me up for my unequivocal praise of Seville, yet I didn't attend that either, so shouldn't you have warned me against saying he was so wonderful at another show that I didn't manage to see? Or was it because I said what you wanted to hear, that Dylan could do no wrong? Am I to assume that the shows that I've always considered to be amongst the best in the entire history of rock 'n' roll, namely 1966, 1975, (late) 1980 and 1988 may also have been pretty duff simply because I wasn't there? It has to work both ways, so maybe we had all better reserve our comments for only the shows that we actually see. Which means that, other than the two Saturday shows, you can't tell me that Dylan's '91 residency was fine, because you weren't there either.

As to suggesting that I should have addressed far more worthy subjects, such as why Dylan played acoustic guitar throughout, I'm afraid that I have no real interest. Maybe he was simply too pissed to tell an acoustic guitar from an electric one, or maybe the band were simply so crap that it didn't really matter. I've spoken to people who were there for the shows who tell me that Dylan was so shit-faced most nights as to make his Friends of Chile appearance seem positively razor-sharp.

My comments were not "ill-considered" or "cheap", they were based upon my right as a fan to feel disappointed when I consider Dylan to be inferior, especially when his performances seem to be suffering through drink or drugs or general indifference. Having said that, I consider Dylan's performances from October 1991 to present to be superb, and I dearly hope that this will continue to be the case.

Finally, then, why don't you read Paul Williams's comments on Dylan's performances on audio tape in the **Homer** interview. There's a guy who's written a whole book based mainly on the conclusions he has drawn through listening to 30 years worth of gigs on tape. But, then, he only writes nice things, doesn't he? Your pay-off line: "you would be hard pressed to find.....a Dylan period that was not golden" firmly places you in the "if it's by Dylan then it must be fantastic" category. And, therefore, since I reserve the right to accept that Dylan is only human and has his flaws like all the rest of us, you and I will have to just agree to disagree.

Well, Mark, you hit the nail on the head with your 'deadline pressures' remark - they always produce a state of depression over my head. Add to this **The Telegraph's** editorial (not that it seemed to be about **Homer**, but the doubt was there) and a couple of other things and I was ripe to over-react. After getting up at 5:00a.m on Tuesday and Wednesday to type your "open letter" and my reply, I picked up Thursday's mail and read an edited version of your piece in the new **Isis**. This left me with a couple of days to yet again amend and mail out an impoverished last issue and I did, indeed, over-react.

As to editors not talking - well, I don't actually *know* the others! They've been in Dylan "fandom" (or "circles" or whatever name you wish to give it) for eons. I'm a newcomer - to "fandom", not to Dylan! - and, in case anyone reading this exchange thinks that there has been any unpleasantness afforded myself as "the newcomer", I'd like to dissuade them of that opinion. Even before ever seeing my disarming smile, the editor of **Isis**, Derek Barker proved a useful point of contact. I sent him five or six copies of Issue One of **Homer** and asked him to distribute them among **Isis** subscribers as I didn't know anyone's address. This he generously did and I thus accrued not only a few subscribers but also contributors - I suspect that you were one of those five! I would be surprised if a certain degree of "rivalry" didn't exist, but everyone is in the business of promoting interest and discussion in Bob Dylan, right? The first fifty **Homers** that went overseas carried the February 1991 **Isis's** concert hand-out and Phil Townsend was helpful to me at the last convention and only the other night Derek was kind enough to spend time talking to me about me selling **Homer** at the **Isis** bash in October.

I only wrote that you'd fallen into the trap of self-importance at one point, Mark - not as a permanent state! I certainly didn't mean to say that Dylan should "get away" with "only turning up", but I detest the insincerity of little "thank you" speeches where each town

name is slotted into the appropriate place. It may seem nice at the time but it can be very false (and seems especially so if you listen to tape after tape of the one tour, as, I believe, some people are wont to do!)

The "whole point" of **Homer** is just as you state. Looking back on the issues so far - physically unavoidable for me at the moment as I can't even make a cup of coffee without falling over piles of the damn things! - I believe that has been achieved on numerous occasions and I'd like to think it will improve until each reader is confident that every issue of **Homer, the slut** will provide such stimulus.

For the remainder of your letter - and I'd like to thank you for the time, consideration and effort you've obviously put into it - it is over to Mike!

Jim Heppell

Le Spectacle de Monsieur Bob Dylan

The question about the French intro to Houston raises another question in my mind - is someone employed just to introduce "The Columbia recording artist Bob Dylan" to the waiting fans - just in case they miss him or want to tape or photograph him (you might as well talk in a foreign language - fortunately). I suppose the words could have been spliced on as a bootlegger's joke but I think that the answer is to be found in **The Telegraph** about M. Blaize. The piece by JB in T. refers to M Blaize as a French acquaintance of Dylan, noting that he was employed to introduce the show. Can I apply for that job?

I Can Still Hear That Voice Crying In The Audience

As to favourite audience cries I think that all tapers - if they cannot be allocated a special area as at Grateful Dead concerts - should be issued with warning signs proclaiming "Silence - Taping in Progress": how many tapes do you have marred by incessant chatter during songs? A Paris (again) **Visions of Johanna** comes to mind, but it is not only the French - (why do those people turn up if they don't want to listen to the songs?!). I have a poor quality Blackbushe tape which includes a sparkling interchange: it starts with "Put that flag down", ignored and repeated more vociferously, and culminates in an exasperated bystander's "Shut up you morons!" (Hear! Hear! - I take it that she was not referring to the band). My favourites are those that elicit a response from Bob as in Houston: *Yeh ... everybody does ...* (well timed pause) *... even you* or *Hallowe'en 1964: anything you say.*

Four Letter and Other Words

You'd probably not believe me if I told you what I've learned. Some lessons are so unpalatable that we can ignore them - like the dubious dictum of Jesus that if you want to follow him you must give up your family, or that love is just a four letter word - fortunately we can interpret rather than ignore. Some lessons are too complex to interpret easily: a few years later the composer of **Love Is Just A Four Letter Word** was singing *love is all there is*. But contradictions we always have to take on board: 'the **Nashville Skyline** period' has been dismissed by some as a wasted time between **Blonde On Blonde** and **Blood On The Tracks** when Dylan was supposed to have been embedded in innocuous domestic bliss, with songs to match. Oh yeah: **Tell Me That It Isn't True!**

James Muir made the point that there is no need to know a poet's biography. Dylan has referred to invasion of privacy songs - like **Confidential To Me** - and the lifetimes in **Love Is Just A Four Letter Word** are "unmentionable by name". In interview Dylan has made the strange comment about not writing love songs because they usually tell lies - strange because some of the covers he has performed effectively have been standards like **Answer Me** or **You Don't Know Me** which might come under the heading of love songs.

Bob Forryan's piece achieved its worthy objective of sending me back to listen to **Another Side Of Bob Dylan**. It referred to love songs and the mystery of **I Don't Believe You** - that it is upbeat when it ought to be bitter. Indeed it is all Dylan could do at more than one point when making that recording to restrain himself from bursting into laughter. Maybe the singer would be bitter if he took the whole thing seriously enough to expect the mutual attention of the night before to be continued the next day; or if he was alone in thinking that this could be the love that was supposed to last for ever. **Ballad In Plain D** comes across as serious because this was the one - "my own true love" - and the song that Dylan has said he later came to regard as too personal to have put out.

Bob Forryan refers to **Mama, You Been On My Mind** - the song that should have been included on the **Another Side** album - and finds it sung by a vulnerable man - the implication being that he has been wounded by this woman. (The question comes back in part to "who has rejected whom?" as I think it did with the **Focus On Don't Think Twice It's All Right**.) I cited this song as expressing the same mood - of "emotional realism" - as **Don't Think Twice It's All Right**. Sometimes it may seem that the singer sings the opposite of what is true - as in **Most of the Time** - and Bob Forryan suggests as much about **Mama You Been On My Mind** saying "of course he protests too much". But *Please understand me* (to quote from the song) - the lyrics successfully set up a contrast (as later did **Just Like A Woman** between the behaviour of a woman and a little girl) between the statement that the singer is not pleading and the fact that she has been on his mind. He tells us that he does not even care where she has been sleeping, and I believe him - it is just that as far as he is concerned one too many mornings have dawned. He can see clearly ... can she? ... can we? ... and wonders if she can see herself as clearly, even with the aid of a mirror; if he is being "emotionally realistic" we can take his assertions at face value.

A third song written about this time, **If You Gotta Go, Go Now**, deals - from a more comical point of view and before the event - with the same theme as **I Don't Believe You**: to put it crudely, the one night stand; and with the perspective from which it should be regarded. The girl from **I Don't Believe You** has taught the singer a lesson - *I can be just like you ... I'll say it's easily done*. The joke is the comedy of manners - we take it and ourselves so seriously - but it will later take a doctor to point out that it is not poison (**Tombstone Blues**).

Happily, all three songs appear in that classic concert when Dylan was certainly not taking himself too seriously - Hallowe'en 1964. Strangely enough, despite her appearance at this concert and involvement with some of Dylan's songs, Joan Baez seems not to have got the joke when she left England prematurely in 1965. **Diamonds and Rust** suggests that she took herself seriously enough to think that she had already paid the purchase price (for a lien on a man's soul?). She had crowed about a love affair that went on too long and sang along with one of the three songs at the Town Hall Concert. Perhaps it is sometimes possible to take too much for granted or get signals crossed: maybe these comments are straying too far into the area of "confidential invasion of privacy" - but they are only picking up what Joan Baez has said publicly, and therefore seem fair game.

Why Apologise?

Bob Forryan suggests we should regret the pain but not the reporting (if pain was caused to the Rotolos by **Ballad In Plain D**). "No sense to apologise, what difference would it make?" Mark Carter's brilliant cartoon history shows an apology ending up in a garbage can - the apology for Dylan's comments at the ECL dinner. But was there really anything for Dylan to apologise for? Socrates was a self appointed gadfly to his society - actually, of course, he got swatted.

As Kinky Friedman rightly points out, there is no reason why a good singer-songwriter should make a good politician: but this does not mean that the comments of a man with the wit to produce brilliant poetry and songs are not worthy of consideration; it does mean we have to make our own response - "I cannot think for you, you have to decide". What has brought Dylan to his exalted or idiotically windy position is the brilliance of his songs - most people, even "Rock critics", speak respectfully of the trilogy of **Bringing It All Back Home**, **Highway 61 Revisited**, **Blonde On Blonde**. I would add that nobody has written and/or put out better songs from **Long Ago and Far Away** to the present 'Never Ending' delights, from **Billy to Covenant Woman** (just to name a couple of songs from "under-rated" periods).

So should we expect Dylan to apologise for any of his output or for his current tour? As he pointed out in 1984 it is up to the audience to come and watch his concerts if they want to.

Stories In The Press

And judging from the extracts that have appeared in **The Telegraph** Al Aronowitz has got it in for Dylan. I suppose in theory we might have expected some comments of insight or interest from an insider who has come to break the bonds of confidence. Personally, I find the sort of reporting expressed by Bueno in **The Telegraph** more worthwhile than this name dropping memoir which mainly regrets that its writer had failed to take copious notes to give us more detail. Is Al seriously suggesting that Dylan should have appeared at

Woodstock? Check out Neil Young's **Roll Another Number** and **Hippie Dream** (and he was there). At least Al does have the grace to counter some of the press on the Isle Of Dylan fiasco - but only after trying to set up the scene for megalomaniac tantrums backstage (fortunately without much success!).

Poet of the Self

Meanwhile the article by Newcastle professor of English proposes a serious assessment of Dylan as poet, placing him in a tradition from Emerson and Eliot to the Beats. What exactly is all this re-invention of the self referring to? - is it a theory of Literary Criticism? (As Dylan said in **I Don't Believe You** it's easily done, just pretend that you never have met.) I have recently come across a book of **Selected Prose** by T.S. Eliot which has the great but objectionable man talking about the impact of poetry on an adolescent, and what in poetry may be of lasting value: this struck a few chords and actually mentioned the same poets you cited as part of your sphere of interest. Eliot did not mention WB Yeats - nor I think did you. Do you know much of him? I must confess to a scandalous lack of engagement with poets Romantic or otherwise - but a general intention to explore should be put into effect, perhaps beginning with a bit of prodding from you about Blake and the angel with four faces. This includes Yeats who seems to suffer from the dual disadvantage of being involved in Irish politics (as an observer I hope!?) and of being a mystic. I have recently come across a book of short stories "gathered" by Yeats - **The Secret Rose** - which co-incided with some trains of thought, initially **Every Grain of Sand**.

... doorway of Temptation's angry flame

One of the striking / complex images in one of Dylan's poems - "from the brow of a superbrain"? (which last phrase reminds me of one of the birth myths of a Greek deity / personification). I was struggling to understand

.. one of those who have come but seldom into the world, and always for its trouble, the dreamers who must do what they dream, the doers who must dream what they do

(should it be "the dreamers dream what they do"? - or maybe it makes not the slightest difference, rather like the question whether the correct word in the **Highway 61 Revisited** sleeve notes is "meaningful or meaningless"?!) - when I came across:

O Divine Rose of Intellectual Flame, let the gates of thy peace be opened to me at last.

These are the words of a tired "old knight in rusted chain armour", whose helmet bore the crest of no lord or king, but a small rose: the rose! Robert Hunter is quoted as saying, with reference to his frequent use of that symbol in his lyrics (Jackson p.152) "I've got this one spirit that's laying roses on me", the rose, he says, is "the most prominent image in the human brain ... no better allegory for, dare I say it, life" [different symbolism claimed in **Renaldo and Clara** I believe - Ginsberg quoting Dylan!]

I suppose that it could be quite a common image to talk about coming under some influence or entering into some state by referring to passing through a door- or gate-way; or equally to refer to some quality as a flame - *words .. burning in my soul*. I am not suggesting that Dylan got this image from Yeats, simply commenting on the co-incidence. Strangely the story goes on to refer to "grains of sand" - in the context of time running out through a sand timer; whereas **Every Grain of Sand** is a **New Testament** reference, I suppose to one of Jesus's sayings about everything being accounted for by God - even things as numberless as grains of sand on a beach or hairs on a head.

Interestingly again (Well, I find it so!) another story in the collection, the story of **Proud Costello**, is on the theme of **Barbara Allen** in reverse; there are even two trees planted where they were buried, ashes in this case, growing inter-twined. In this version it is the woman who is sick for love and the man.

Good grief Jim, just to remember that this was your initial reaction to **Issue 6**, soon to be followed up with numerous more letters, puts me to shame for ever having complained of the amount of time and effort it took. Thanks for such a detailed response. Starting with your last points - and Yeats was 'omitted' by me only for reasons of space, his presence could almost be taken for granted - the connections, influences and currents in poetic thought and practice are endlessly fascinating. However, due to the inevitable dwelling on the "eternal verities", on the basic questions of identity and existence, connections can seem to be real and solid where

only coincidence exists. This can lead to sloppiness in literary and social "histories" when the co-incidences are compounded by a loose grouping in time and major philosophical and artistic works are judged by some dubious *zeitgeist* theory. There would appear to be little doubt, however, that Dylan is well acquainted with the works of Yeats, nor is there any doubt whatever about his familiarity with the work of Blake. This is why I thought that the various enthusiasts of *Angelina* that have written could *maybe* find relevance in the centrality of the "angel with four faces" in Blake's work. It is equally, if not more, likely that Dylan's inspiration came straight from The Bible. Just as the number four had various properties in Magic and Legend so it had in the fables of Christianity. If I had to hazard a guess as to which particular part would be most likely to be in Dylan's mind, I'd go for *Ezekiel*...enough of this though, I've been told off recently for rabbiting on about poets and so forth. I've also been told off for bringing football into *Homer, the slut*, so I'll combine football and poetry with a slight Dylan connection and annoy nearly everyone by asking if they heard about Frenchman Eric Cantona's problems at current league champions (did you like that, Mel and Andy?) Leeds United? Seems like the immensely likeable forward mentioned in a radio interview that his hero was "Rimbaud" and has been inundated ever since by mementos sent in by his adoring fans - of "Rambo". Ah well....

Danny Lob

Drab weather, barely audible chatter of some Radio One nerd, newspaper full of war in Eastern Europe, the tea is cold and stewed. Just your common or garden Bank Holiday Sunday.

The hand turning the pages of the newspaper pauses and trembles, sweat beads the forehead, eyes lose their focus and there is an almost overwhelming sense of well being. No, I've not been groped by a busty blonde, the cause of my malady is an article glanced out of the corner of my eye in the "pop" page. Barabara Dickson's new release is an album of Dylan songs. My heart is so full. Bob Dylan has at last received the recognition he so richly deserves. No doubt he experienced the symptoms I described earlier when he heard the news.

I insist, nay demand, that your next magazine is dedicated entirely to the Dickson album. You must dissect it track by track and tell us the true meaning behind it. I'll give you three starters:

1. Bobby and Barbara share the same initials
2. Neither of them can sing
3. They're engaged

I await your next magazine in fretful anticipation.

P.S. Bob says stop sending him copies of your fanzine - he doesn't own a dictionary and therefore cannot understand a word.

Interesting "PS" there, Dan - I may call you Dan, I trust - not that I send the magazine to Dylan, anyway, and not because I think the greatest wordsmith of his time would need one. You, on the other hand, are in need of all the help you can get. I think a dictionary of the "spelling" variety would do you some good. I don't want to discourage you from trying to write - (as I realize that it was only in your forties that you began to try and catch up on the education you missed due to the time spent on religious indoctrination rather than basic literacy) - but, really, you should get someone to correct your errors. They could teach you to stop being so jealous of people who've made something of their lives too. However, underneath your sarcasm, you've touched on a good point -> all these great artists whose surname begins with "D": Dostoyevsky, Dylan, Dickens, Dumas. Dick.... And, of course, Dickson for whom, I like to think, Dylan played his wonderful version of *Answer Me, My Love* at Seville last year.

Also, once you've mastered basic communication, you could perhaps study "art appreciation and criticism": since your comments: "dissect track by track" and "tell us the true meaning" betray the fact that, once again, you have no idea what you are talking about. (Readers may refer to a previous letter from the equally dubiously named, "Robert Robertson".)

Bryan Gray

Thanks for the copy of the magazine...I look forward to the next issue. Nice variety throughout the issue, the ability to browse, and return to sections is enjoyable and the cuttings in *Bits & Bobs* an interesting aspect, if even just for curiosity value..and thanks for the more spontaneous and "human" tone of the 'phone line.

Thanks, Bryan, particularly for the word "human" - so much kinder than some other comments! (Especially when our families call from Scotland and Finland!)

Rob Breeze

I don't know if you're interested in the comments of a "casual" Dylan fan, but if you are, read on.

I particularly enjoyed the article on **Angelina/Foot of Pride** - it increased my enjoyment of the songs, which is what it is all about, I suppose. Also the long press article from the endless tour - I am often mystified as to why Dylan insists on churning out second rate albums, performances etc. and this partly explained his motivation.

I thought the J.R. Stokes item on **under the red sky** was hilarious - there's far more time, thought and imagination there than in the album. I don't know what shoes he wears, but the writer can certainly make a silk purse of an article out of a pig's ear of an album.

Maybe from the above comments you think I'm not enough of an enthusiast to subscribe - let me know and send my cheque back if I don't qualify. I do actually like a lot of Dylan's work from throughout his career - my favourite albums (in terms of the ones I go back to again and again) are **Hard Rain** and **Self Portrait**, so maybe I'm a bit of a minority within a minority.

Rob, firstly I never, never return cheques....secondly, you seem a positive Dylan enthusiast compared to some of my readers, so don't worry that I'm only interested in people who blindly adore Dylan. We all have our different likes and dislikes. What fascinates me about your letter is your choice of **Hard Rain** and **Self Portrait** as the two albums you most go back to. I should hasten to add that I love the former dearly - it is an incredible LP; rubbished by (nearly) all at the time but still, to me, as fresh and powerful as ever. You will have guessed by now that I'm not so keen on **Self Portrait** - large parts of it leave me cold (well, short of boiling anyway)! It is the Isle Of Wight stuff, I think, that really irritates me. I do love some tracks on it, but....Anyway you'll find that these two LPs cause fairly polarised reactions among the demented enthusiasts. Each has its share of vociferous supporters and detractors. (As does **under the red sky** - which I rate highly!)

You are far too self effacing - it is precisely your feelings and reactions to Dylan that I am interested in. Indeed this is the best thing about running **Homer**; the feedback. I don't judge the value of someone's opinions on the amount of gigs he's seen or tapes he owns.

I think Mr Stokes's **From Behind A Burning Bush** is always one of the highlights of the magazine. He structures his pieces so well that they are a pleasure to read, whatever one may feel about his conclusions. Though, he tends to put a fairly convincing case together as well don't you think?

Carol Bedford

I picked up issue six of **Homer, the slut** recently when in London. I had never seen the magazine before and was pleasantly surprised. I felt I had to write to express congratulations and thanks. I love the clear layout.

How refreshing to see the emphasis placed back on his work. It had reached the stage where I'd almost forgotten what he'd done (and continues to do so well.) The reason I first subscribed to a fanzine was in the hope of an intelligent treatment of the songs. **The Telegraph** used to do this but, first disassociated itself from fans and fanzines and, secondly, is now just anecdotal material.

Your editorial especially pleased me, I have recently been almost put off Dylan himself due to the attitude of some people who write about him! I realize you wouldn't want to join in the back-biting that goes on but even John Bauldie expressed the view that Dylan couldn't possibly survive without his fanzine and owed him something or other. I'm referring specifically to **The Telegraph 35** when, in response to Jim Dring's somewhat excessive letter - 'You've done enough to be recognised' etc. He indicated that yes, he too thought that Dylan should grant **The Telegraph** an interview.

Even if one concedes that fanzines provide a publicity service for Dylan, the egotistic attitudes of such writers renders that function counter-productive since, as I've already stated, they're putting people off Dylan! I'm reminded, as your piece aptly stated, of Dylan's quote that *People who think of themselves as being important when they write about things that are important* (page 21 of **Biograph** booklet, interview with Camerone Crowe.) They take themselves too seriously, something Dylan would never do. And where's the humour?

(Before I continue, I'd like to point out in the interests of fairness that in *The Telegraph* 12 Mr. Bauldie stated: *Dylan's office doesn't owe us; Dylan will go on*. In addition, none of my comments are intended as an attack on someone held in such high regard as John Bauldie but, to demonstrate the attitudes I disagree with, I feel I have to take issue with some of his past comments and current output while formulating my response to your editorial and what I can gather of Mark Carter's opinions re fans and fanzines.)

I don't mind being called a fan and I don't feel superior to fans of other artists. All this 'Dylan fans are better than Deadheads' because Dylan's better than the Grateful Dead reminds me of 'my daddy's bigger than your daddy'.

Therefore, when Mr Bauldie wishes to be considered different or separate from the other fanzines (who he called "creatures" apparently) in the *Q* magazine article of January 1987, and when he states over & over that he's not running a fan club but a 'prestigious society of scholars' - I almost cheer those honest Elvis folk who will pay anything for The King's sweat! (Or, as the latest *Vox* magazine reports, a piece of toast once nibbled by George Harrison!)

It is interesting to compare the fanzines in that *Q* magazine article. For instance, the lady who runs the Kate Bush fanzine, states she'd never ask Kate - who she's in regular contact with - for an interview because she knows how much Kate dislikes them and, since the magazine is for Kate, there is no question of her owing them.

As for 'the society of scholars', **Homer** has obviously picked up that mantle since *The Telegraph* lately prints account after account of a person who was in Dylan's company half-an-hour either 25 years ago or last week. If such is the content, then I don't understand the aloofness. Let's hear it for fans. There's nothing wrong with them. And I say that knowing all about Mark Chapman and Dylan's somewhat derogatory comments in the *Biograph* booklet. He should be flattered he has so many who are so devoted - and, who knows, he may be in his more 'uncool' moments.

I'm simply arguing for consistency, if people are going to divert attention away from the work to the person, then they shouldn't put down "fans". One of the most refreshing people in the Dylan world is Professor Christopher Ricks. He begins his lectures with the disarming admission (confession?): *I'm absolutely besotted by the man*. It makes everyone feel welcome and equal. They are there to learn about and celebrate Dylan's work and their appreciation of it together.

Another irony is in Mark Carter's opinion that Dylan should acknowledge those who attend several concerts. He may be doing just that! If he sees the same face every night, then he'll naturally assume everyone sees several concerts at a time - which is not true of the majority of his audience. Therefore, each concert isn't important, so this may be contributing to his complacent manner that the press keep harping on about. Again, this is counter-productive.

However, since your piece validated my own feelings, I'd like to see Mark's original open letter. See, I'd have loved to see your and his comments in full. Some of us out here don't subscribe to every fanzine, although I appreciate your desire to avoid obvious duplication with other fanzines.

You say that the *Record Collector* has commented on the "childish behaviour of Dylan fans." Was this a passing observation while discussing some other topic or was it an expanded view on Dylan fans? Whichever, which issue of *Record Collector*? And, if an aside, what was the article about? Not that I like her much but Janet Street Porter once said that the worst thing about Dylan is his fans!

Lastly, (I swear it!), you're right when you add that "perhaps any fandom" lacks humour. You ain't seen nothing like the angry hysteria provoked if you say you suspect that any of the 4 Beatles or Elvis are only human to one of their respective followers. It makes the most myopic Dylan fan a model of rationality!

So much going on here, Carol, I hardly know where to start - thanks for such a lengthy and detailed response to your first **Homer**, *the slut*. I find it interesting that you favour the previous *Telegraph* concentration on performances rather than personal history; I do myself - grateful as I am for all issues. I suspect it may be a temporary matter of degree and, when new Dylan work appears it will be given due attention. (under the red sky was an example of this.)¹ I think that if I answer you at length re fans and fandom I will only be repeating myself. Suffice to say that I think some perspective and humour are always essential. Dylan, himself, is the important figure and he has a great sense of humour. I've never seen the *Q* article from 1987 that you mention - but it sounds like

¹ Since both Carol and I wrote the above another issue of *The Telegraph* has emerged - and concentrated on the "new" *Basement Tapes*.

maybe there was some humour involved there? Speaking of humour, your 'my daddy is bigger..' comment reminded me of a glorious PEANUTS cartoon on this theme:

"My daddy's more interested in Foreign Policy than your daddy". "Good Grief".

A dialogue to bring to mind the next time anyone boasts about how many concerts they've seen or tapes they have! As Bob Forryan perspicaciously remarks in his article in this issue quantity of exposure has no necessary link with quality of perception. I began **Homer** for the reason you mention, namely getting back to the songs and shows themselves; I'm trying to be analytical but understandable, serious but fun.

I'll ask Mark if I can send on his full correspondence, the edited version appeared in **ISIS** 42 pp35-36.

The **Record Collector** piece appeared in Issue 153 during a review of Ian Woodward's booklet on background information to **The Bootleg Series**.

Michael Gerfin

After being sceptical at first I very soon began to enjoy **Homer**. I find the approach you take very interesting. I especially like **Focus On** with its compilation of different and often diverging comments on a particular song. And J.R. Stokes' pieces in **From Behind A Burning Bush** are very well written and offer some very interesting ideas and thoughts. And somebody telling us his/her impressions of a whole album is something that definitely belongs to the important things in a Dylan (or anybody) magazine. Disagreement is unavoidable (I cannot understand why someone doesn't like **Stuck Inside Of Mobile...**, too), but this makes the whole business interesting.

Keep up the good work. I am looking forward to the new issues and to the back issues of **Homer**. *the slut*.

Thanks very much Michael, I'm glad that you've been "won over" and hope that you like this issue too.





MORE NEXT MONTH.....

Homer, *the slut* is pleased to announce the beginning of a new, regular, column by Michael Gray. Each issue will contain **A NOTE ON:** - we start with:-

BOB DYLAN, BUDDY HOLLY AND THE ASPIRATED GLOTTAL STOP

In a long lost article I re-discovered recently - **Wo-Uh-Ho Peggy Sue: Exploring a Teenage Queen Linguistically**, in R Serge Denisoff's journal **Popular Music & Society** (Bowling Green, Ohio, USA, Vol 2, No 3, Spring 1973) - contributor Maury Dean concludes that Dylan killed off the aspirated glottal stop - the "wo-uh-ho" that Buddy Holly patented. But s/he has to conclude this, having begun by arguing that the aspirated glottal stop first arose in the early rock years to irradiate uninteresting lyrics with a non-language expressiveness: that "wo-uh-hoes" were born out of need, to compensate for all the obligatory "please be true"s. It must follow from this that, as Dean puts it:

Where have all the 'wo-uh-hoes' gone? ... From a musical nativity of Hollyesque gimmicks and Shannon falsettoes, Dylan moved over to lyric poetry, and so did everybody else. Baroque vocalics evaporated ... The aspirated glottal stop dinosaur was hunted down by a tribe of troubadours and poets.

Well of course in one way this was true: or rather, something similar is a truism - namely that Bob Dylan showed rock'n'roll how to grow up and be able to say things about a real world beyond bedroom walls of panting teenage angst. But was it that process that killed off the aspirated glottal stop? That would make it seem as if somehow Holly and Dylan were on opposite sides, whereas it is clear how much as one they are in spirit.

The pertinent, disentangling fact here is that before Bob Dylan ever made a record, let alone a rock'n'roll one with grown-up words, the aspirated glottal stop had already switched from being a tiny part of Buddy Holly's immensely resourceful expressive armoury to being an exaggerated device, an impoverished mechanism for insipid imitators. "Hollyesque gimmicks and Shannon falsettoes" can only refer to that in-limbo era after Holly's bodily death and just before Bob Dylan's musical birth.

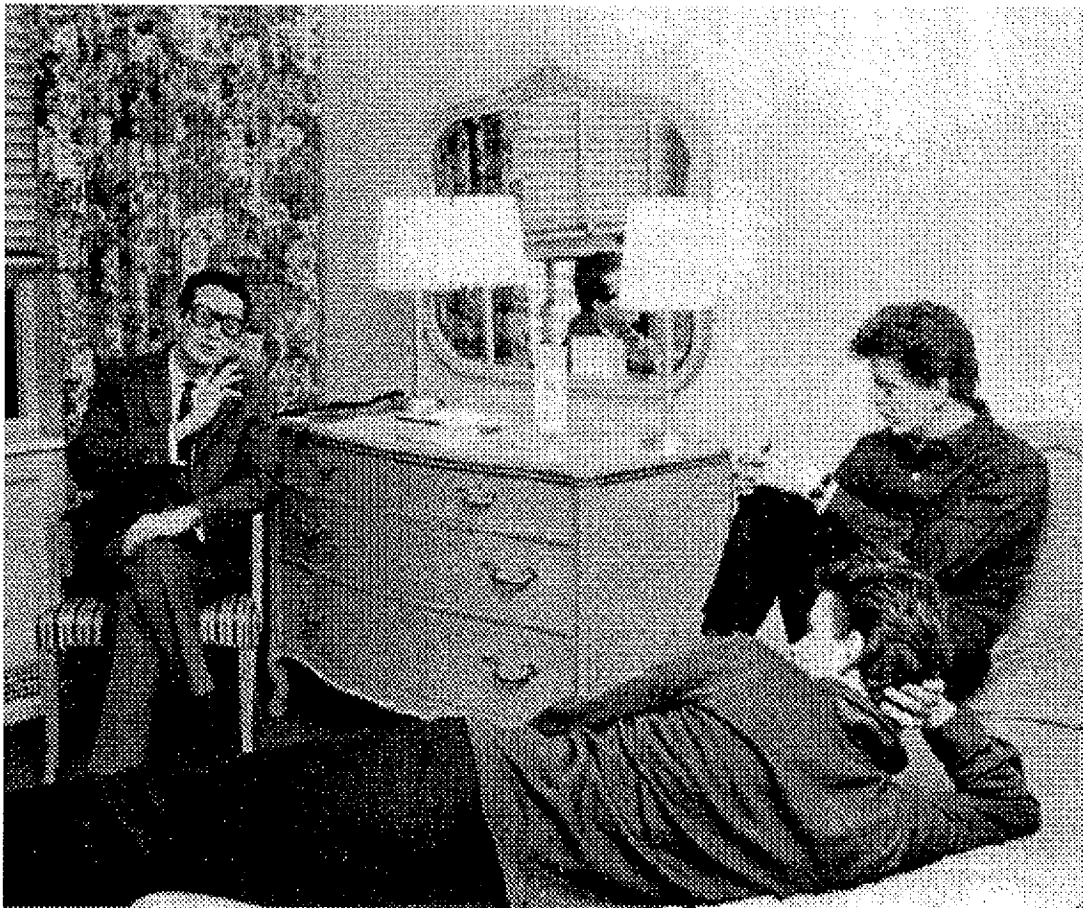
By 1961, when rock'n'roll but rarely made the charts anymore, the aspirated glottal stop was already uncomfortably implanted in the soggy body of Paramoronic, Vintonised, Tillotsonated, Roed and Berried pop that had replaced rock'n'roll and filled up the charts. Dylan didn't need to kill it. By then it was just a gimmick and therefore already deader than Buddy Holly will ever be.

In any case, Bob Dylan, with his rich variety of voices - voices that can carve out syllables as if from stone and make numinous words as unpoetically ordinary as "dollar", "road" and "hand" is the last person Maury Dean should look to as offering a division between

"hand" is the last person Maury Dean should look to as offering a division between those with vocal style and those who sing "important words". No-one who appreciates Bob Dylan or Buddy Holly could go along with the idea that someone singing "poetry", or social comment, should abandon all vocal devices in favour of some sort of unadorned "straight-forwardness". This is not the Bob Dylan but the Pete Seeger worldview - and Pete Seeger could no more have killed off the aspirated glottal stop than Lee Harvey Oswald.

© Michael Gray, 1992.

Buddy Holly explains the point to the Everly Brothers



It's OK Boys, you can record Lay Lady Lay - it wasn't him that killed off my aspirated glottal stops

Congratulations, You're A Big Girl Now (Pictures from Love's Other Side)

*Joy & Woe are woven fine,
a Clothing for the Soul divine;
Under every grief & pine
runs a joy with silken twine.
It is right it should be so;
man was made for Joy & Woe,
and when this we rightly know,
Thro' the World we safely go.*

Auguries of Innocence
William Blake

On Wednesday the 25th January 1961 an old man lay dying in the Greystone Park Hospital, a home for the mentally disturbed situated near Morris Plains, New Jersey. The day had started just like all the other days since the old man had been committed to the care of this bleak Institution some 5 years before. He awoke to find that, no matter how hard he tried, he still couldn't stop his hands from shaking for long enough to enable him to hold a cup and saucer without spilling and dribbling, he still couldn't light his own cigarette without burning his bedclothes and the muscles of his vocal chords were still unable to resound and declare to the world what he could quite capably declare to himself inside his mind. His train of words was derailed somewhere, for whilst he could easily string together sentences, paragraphs and pages inside his head, they would only get emitted from his mouth as unintelligible utterances, half-words and mumbles.

The nurses came along and humoured him, they helped him to drink without spilling and they lit his cigarettes. The doctors had told them that this old man was very sick. He suffered from constant delusions. Like the stories he had made up about having written more than a thousand songs, he also claimed that he had written a novel and he had said that he had made records for the Library of Congress. No-one really took any notice of these wild ramblings and, anyway, the old man's disease just couldn't be treated. His medication was designed to calm him, not cure him.

Something did happen, however, to make that Wednesday special for the old man. He had a visitor - a scruffy kid with a guitar had remonstrated with the Ward Staff, begging them to let him in to talk to the old man. The kid had told the nurses that he had hitch-hiked all the way from his home town in Minnesota just to be with the old man. He wouldn't keep him long, he wouldn't overexcite him, perhaps he'd just play something on his guitar to cheer up the old man. The nurses couldn't see any harm in it so they let the kid through.

Reaching his bedside, the visitor looked down at the decaying old man who was barely able to lift his head

in greeting. It was a precious moment frozen in time, encapsulating the going out and the coming in; the old and the new: the old man's creative life had ended, the kid's creative life was just beginning. The visitor took the patient's trembling hand and that first touch forged another link in the chain. For the old man was Woody Guthrie, the scruffy young kid with a guitar was Bob Dylan.

The two folk singers met on many more occasions after this initial introduction at the Greystone Park Hospital and in his *11 Outlined Epitaphs* Dylan wrote about his relationship with Woody:

*Woody never made me fear
and he didn't trample any hopes
for he just carried a Book of Man
an' gave it t' me t' read awhile
an' from it I learned my greatest lesson.*

If indeed there was such a book then a central character in Woody's *Book of Man* would have been his mother Nora Guthrie. The pages would surely have echoed with the songs she sang to Woody when he was a child, with one song in particular having full pride of place; the song containing the following verse:

*A picture from life's other side
Somebody has fell by the way
And a life has gone out with the tide
That might have been happy someday.
Some poor mother at home
Is watching and waiting alone.
Longing to hear from her loved one so dear,
That's a picture from life's other side.*

There would have been many pictures from life's "other side" in Woody's *Book of Man*, indeed enough to fill an entire portrait gallery of characters who do not fit squarely into their allotted place in society, of outcasts and all those in taken-for-granted situations; for Woody was a Champion of the Underdog and that remained his song throughout his creative life. Although these words were attributed to the unfortunate Tom Joad in Woody's long story-ballad of

the same name, they really summed up Woody's own attitude towards his fellow man:

*Wherever little children are hungry and cry
Wherever people ain't free.*

*Wherever men are fightin' for their rights
That's where I'm gonna be, Ma.
That's where I'm gonna be.*

There would also have been pictures of human tragedy and suffering in Woody's book; pictures from the "other side" of his own life and each picture would tell a story:- the story of how he witnessed the deterioration of the mental condition of his own mother until she was ultimately admitted to an Insane Asylum; the story of his favourite elder sister Clara who died at the age of 14 years after being badly burned in an accident with a kerosene lamp; the story of how history repeated itself when his own beloved daughter Cathy, for whom he wrote hundreds of poems and songs, died at the tender age of 4 years after suffering burns in an accident caused by an electrical wiring fault; and the story of how the free bird of his own creative spirit was so unfairly caught and caged by the same terrifying disease that took his mother.

To complete Woody's *Book of Man*, there would have been pictures from loves' "other side"; illustrations of the crestfallen and broken hearted, of those who had been shattered to pieces by the untimely ending of a love affair. Woody himself was no stranger to the jails of those who are imprisoned by their emotions. He loved passionately and intensely but he suffered the anxiety and despair of 3 broken marriages and the dissatisfaction at the termination of innumerable other liaisons with the opposite sex. He must have spent many lonely, restless hours wondering exactly what he had done wrong for such havoc to be wreaked upon his personal relationships, and the image of Woody in such circumstances is, in itself, a picture of loves' "other side".

So perhaps that then would have been Woody Guthrie's *Book of Man* a book bulging with pictures from the "other side" of life and love: that darkened side that beholds the tragedy and despair of the individual characters in the book to match the tragedy and despair suffered by Woody in his own life. And the greatest lesson to be learned from such a book would surely be how to accept that tragedy and despair is part of life, that the circumstances of those two impostors have to be met face to face and their stories told without regret or shame.

Dylan puts this lesson squarely into practice in two songs which, although recorded many years apart, have strikingly similar images and both paint pictures from loves' "other side", i.e. pictures of someone who has lost his special love entirely because of his own

conduct and who is thus rendered to a state of despairing sorrow with a sense of bitterness pointed at his former lover. The two songs are **You're A Big Girl Now** first recorded at Columbia's A & R Studios in New York in September 1974; and **Congratulations** recorded (together with the remaining Travelling Wilbury's) almost 14 years later in Dylan's Malibu garage in April 1988. (I would contend that Dylan was solely responsible for the composition of this song - indeed unlike other Wilbury songs, it is copywrited by Special Rider Music).

The similarities in these songs are so very close that it would seem that, despite the number of years between their recordings, they could have been written at the same time and directed towards the same person. For instance both songs concern a former lover of the singer who was, at some stage, very important to him. Dylan stresses that importance in the course of describing the effect on him of the couples separation. In **You're A Big Girl Now** the singer is

*...going out of my mind with a pain that stops and starts
ever since we've been apart.*

In **Congratulations** he sings

*I guess I must have loved you more than I ever knew
My world is empty now 'cause it don't have you.*

In both songs the result of the separation is the cause of some physical damage to the singer's heart; the pain in **You're A Big Girl Now** is "like a corkscrew to my heart" whereas the hurt suffered to the heart in **Congratulations** is a result of her "tearing it all apart." (It is interesting to note that it is of course not possible to physically tear a heart apart but of course it is quite possible to tear apart a piece of paper like a marriage certificate or a palimony contract).

The singer is the casualty of the broken affair in both songs, in **You're A Big Girl Now** he is "back in the rain" and in **Congratulations** he is left "in need"; whereas the former lover is the one who seems to have bettered by the separation: in **You're A Big Girl Now** she is "on dry land" and in **Congratulations** she "finally did succeed."

There is, in both songs, the promise that the singer would mend his errant ways to bring about an improved situation if they both stuck together. "I can change I swear" he promises in **You're A Big Girl Now** and in **Congratulations** he sings "If I had just one more chance to win your heart again, I would do things differently..." But time seems to have run out for both of them, in **You're A Big Girl Now** "time is a jet plane, it moves too fast" and in **Congratulations** the lyric is simply "now it's too late".

The singer also alludes to his mental condition in both songs. In **You're A Big Girl Now** he is said to be "going out of my mind" and in **Congratulations** whilst he lays alone in his bed, he has "an image of you going round in my head." There are also references to some kind of financial settlement, in **Congratulations** he confirms "You've got a good deal" and in **You're A Big Girl Now** he sings about "the price I have to pay". Certain lines with sexual undertones also appear: in **You're A Big Girl Now** he is singing to a girl who has gone "all the way" and in **Congratulations** she always "came out on top"

Dylan also uses the image of a bird in both songs to perform a clever juxtaposition between freedom and slavery, for whereas a bird is usually associated with freedom ("as free as a bird") in the context of these songs, the image of the bird is used to underline the sorrow of the singers enslaved heart. In **Congratulations** he sings:

*This morning I looked out my window and found.
A bluebird singing but there was no-one around.*

In **You're A Big Girl Now** there is a:

*Bird on the horizon, sittin' on a fence,
He's singin' his song for me at his own expense.
And I'm just like that bird,
Singin' just for you.
I hope that you can hear,
Hear me singin' through these tears.*

Dylan also has a parting shot in both songs for the former lover who has burned him so badly; bitter/sweet expressions of sarcasm that go to make up the very title to each song: in the earlier song it is "You're a big girl now" and in the later song it is "Congratulations".

Ultimately however the common denominator for these songs is that they both paint a picture of loves' "other side"; they both describe the hurt and the pain rather than the joy and the pleasure of love. So, like Woody Guthrie before him, Bob Dylan has opened his own *Book of Man* and has given it to us to read awhile. The time and the words are different but the lesson, for us - the readers, remains the same.

Woody Guthrie was who he was because he came along in the time he came along in. For me he was like a link in a chain. Like I am for other people, and we all are for somebody. We're all just links in a chain. There was an innocence to Woody Guthrie. There was a certain type of innocence that I never regained - I know that's what I was looking for. Whether it was real or whether it was a dream, who's to say? But it was like a kind of lost innocence. And after him it was over.

Bob Dylan; transcribed from BBC Radio and printed in the liner notes to *FOLKWAYS: A Vision Shared*, Guthrie/Leadbelly Tribute album

Notes

1. The biographical details concerning Woody Guthrie are taken from the excellent book "Woody Guthrie - A Life" - by Joe Klein.
2. With thanks to Dave Heath who gave me the jig-saw of this article. My part was easy, I just had to put the pieces together.

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A BOOK THAT NOBODY CAN WRITE.....

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BOB DYLAN



NEWPORT 1965, DYLAN UNVEILS HIS ELECTRIC SOUND. THE AUDIENCE ARE DUMBFOUNDED AND ANGRY.....



..... DYLAN LAUNCHES THE BAND INTO "LIKE A ROLLIN STONE" WHICH HAS HIT NUMBER 2 IN THE U.S. SINGLES CHART, BUT THE AUDIENCE BEGINS TO TURN NASTY AND HOSTILE.....

..... PETE SEEGER, BACKSTAGE, DISPLAYS MUCH THE SAME SUBTLE RESPONSE AS THE AUDIENCE.....



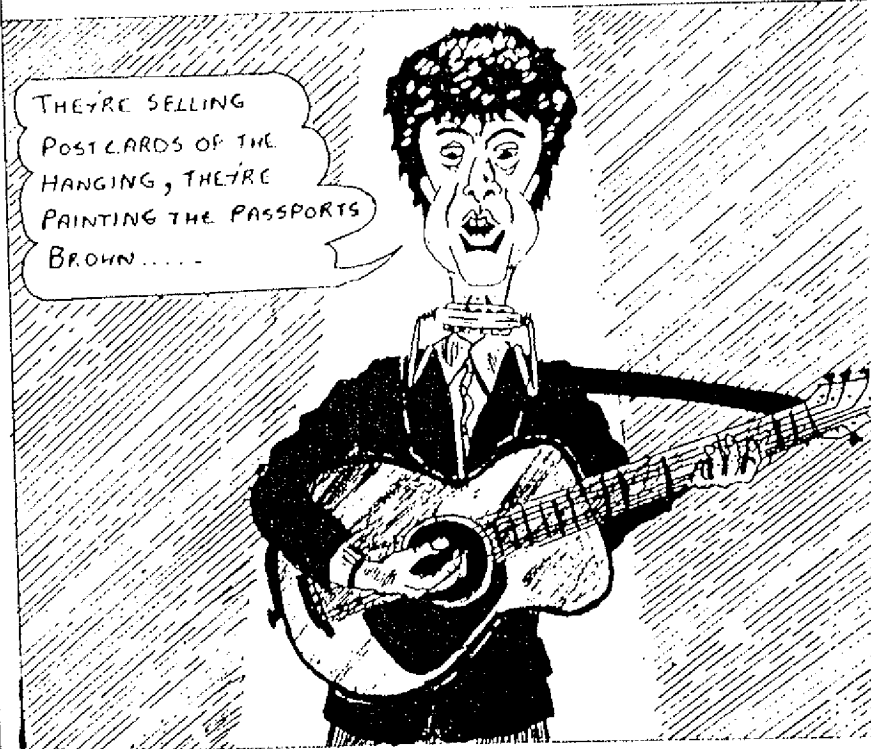
..... AFTER HIS SHORT SET, DYLAN RETURNS WITH HIS ACOUSTIC GUITAR, AND THE AUDIENCE THINK THAT THEY HAVE WON THE "OLD" DYLAN BACK. THE IRONY OF WHAT DYLAN SINGS IS LOST ON THEM, BUT NOT OF DYLAN WHO SHEDS A TEAR AS HE BIDS FARE-THEE- WELL TO PART OF HIS FOLLOWING.....





... THE ENSUING HORROR AND PANIC AFTER NEWPORT MANIFESTS ITSELF IN A 'WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?' SYNDROME. SUDDENLY, EVERYONE IS FOR OR AGAINST DYLAN AND THERE AIN'T NO NEUTRAL GROUND

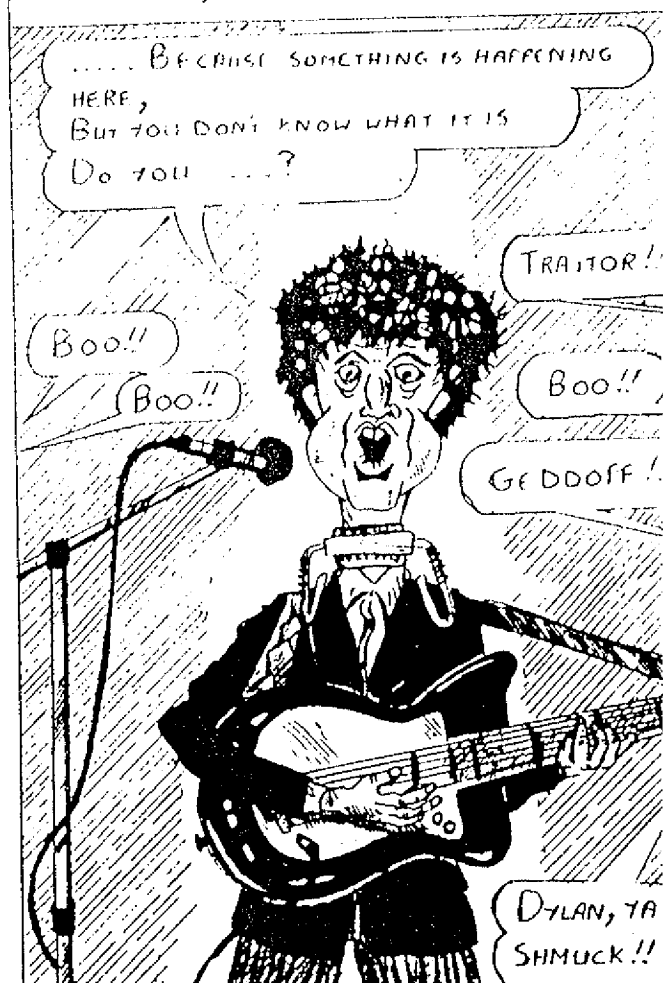
.... DYLAN, SPECIFICALLY, IS UNCONCERNED. HE HAS A CONCERT AT FOREST HILLS TENNIS STADIUM. EXPECTATIONS ARE HIGH. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT TO EXPECT. WHEN DYLAN APPEARS WITH AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR ALL ALONE IT SEEMS AS THOUGH HE HAS BOWED TO PUBLIC PRESSURE



... AFTER THE FIRST SET DYLAN RECEIVES RAPTUROUS PRAISE, BUT, AFTER A SHORT BREAK, DYLAN BRINGS ON HIS OTHER MUSICIANS - AL KOOPER, HARVEY BROOKS, EVON HELM AND ROBBIE ROBERTSON. THERE'S AN UNBODILY HUSH FROM THE AUDIENCE AS DYLAN PLUGS HIS GUITAR INTO THE AMP



.... THE BAND BURSTS INTO LIFE. DYLAN HAS IMPROVED THE SOUND SINCE NEWPORT. THEY'RE BETTER REHEARSED, THE SOUND MIX IS BETTER. IT'S A GOOD SET - A LITTLE LOUD, BUT A GOOD SET. EVEN SO, THE CROWD ARE AS HOSTILE AS AT NEWPORT, MAYBE MORE SO





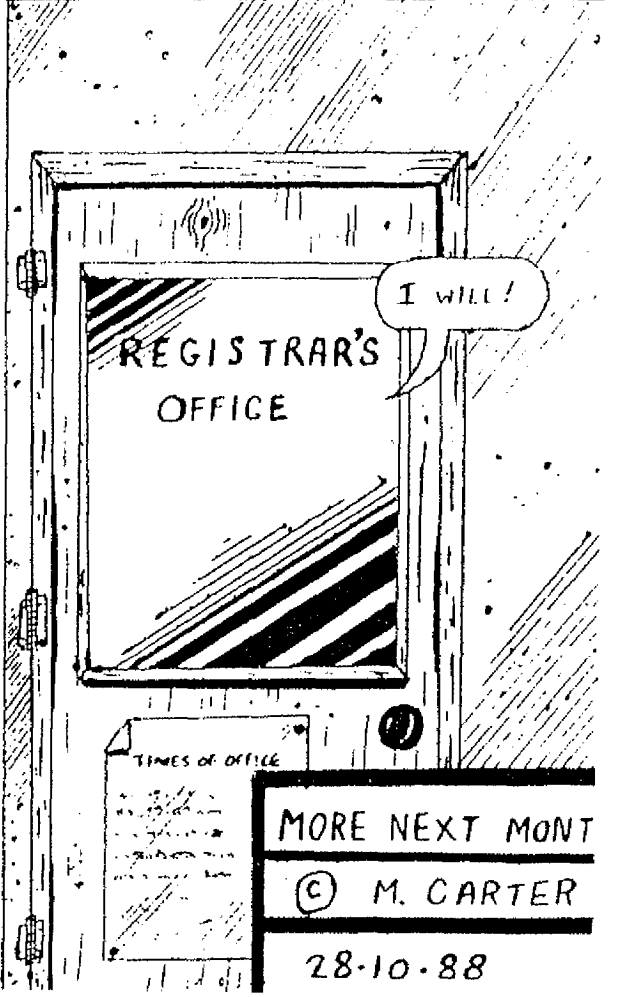
LITTLE STRANGE ... OR PERHAPS HE KNEW SOMETHING THAT THE OTHERS DIDN'T ...



... AUGUST: DYLAN RELEASES 'HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED'; HIS FIRST FULL-ELECTRIC ALBUM AND HIS FIRST FULL-FLEDGED MASTERPIECE. EVERY TRACK IS A GEM, FROM THE TITLE TRACK THROUGH 'LIKE A ROLLING STONE' TO THE AWESOME 'DESOLATION ROW'. DYLAN'S POWER IS AT ITS HEIGHT. HE WILL NEVER AGAIN QUITE COMPARE WITH THOSE GENIUS MONTHS OF 1965, EVEN THOUGH HIS GREATEST WORKS WOULD ARGUABLY NOT APPEAR FOR ANOTHER DECADE.....

..... WITH 'HIGHWAY 61', DYLAN CHANG THE FACE OF ROCK MUSIC FOREVER. HIS INFLUENCE IS EQUALLED ONLY BY THE BEATLES. THE TRANSFORMATION FROM SCRUFFY BEATNIK FOLKIE TO FULL-FLEDGED ROCK 'N' ROLL STAR IS COMPLETE BUT, BEFORE HE CONTINUES HIS ASSAULT ON THE WORLD, HE HAS ONE MORE THIN TO DO. GET MARRIED. WHAT ELSE?

BOB DYLAN HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED



A BOOK THAT NOBODY CAN WRITE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BOB DYLAN

.. NOVEMBER 22ND 1965: DYLAN MARRIES
HER PLAYGIRL BUNNY SARA LOWNDES IN A
REY CIVIL CEROMONY.....

YEAH, SARA, I KNOW
YOU CAME STRAIGHT
FROM WORK, BUT
COULDN'T YOU HAVE
CHANGED FIRST???



..... EX WIFE OF PLAYBOY
BOSS VICTOR LOWNDES,
SARA, WITH HER KNOWLEDGE
OF ZEN, OFFERS DYLAN
RELIEF FROM HIS WHIRL-
WIND CAREER.....



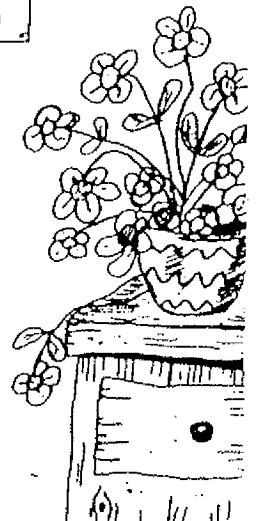
HET, BOB, YOU IN
THERE? YOU GOT
A CONCERT TONIGHT!!
REMEMBER THE TOUR?

HET, ALBERT, GIVIE A
BREAK WILLTA? I'M
ON MY HONEYMOON!!

..... HOWEVER DYLAN HAS
NO REAL RESPITE FROM AN
INCREASINGLY GRUELLING
SERIES OF CONCERTS,
RECORDING SESSIONS AND
INTERVIEWS....



RING FOR
SERVICE



OTLAN BEGINS TO GIVE A FEW HILARIOUS PRESS CONFERENCES. HIS DISLIKE AND DISTRUST OF THE MEDIA MANIFESTS ITSELF IN A SERIES OF WIERD AND HIGHLY HUMOROUS ANSWERS TO DULL AND PREDICTABLE QUESTIONS..



DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

NOT YET!

Psssst ... IT'S REALLY ABOUT
 A TRAFFIC WARDEN WHO GAVE
 ME A TICKET IN LONDON, BUT
 DON'T LET ON ... KEEP 'EM
 GUESSING!!

YES, I WISH FOR
 JUST ONE TIME YOU
 COULD STAND INSIDE
 MY SHOES,
 YOU'D KNOW WHAT A
 DRAG IT IS TO SEE
 YOU.....

..... MEANWHILE, DYLAN STILL WORKS ON HIS BOOK. IT PROMISES TO CARRY ON WHILE HIS ALBUM SLEEVES LEFT OFF. TO CONFUSE MATTERS, HE BURNS EVERY THIRD PAGE OF HIS MANUSCRIPT.

A! I DON'T
MATTER WHAT I
DO - PEOPLE'LL
BE TOO SCARED TO
COMMIT THEY DON'T
UNDERSTAND IT,
ANYWAY!!



..... AS THE YEAR WINDS OUT, DYLAN IS STILL RECORDING THE SESSIONS THAT WILL EVENTUALLY MAKE UP "BLONDE ON BLONDE". HIS USAGE OF, AND RELIANCE ON, DRUGS IS BECOMING HEAVIER. IN 1969, HE WILL REVEAL THAT THE DRUGS DIDN'T INSPIRE THE SONGS BUT DID HELP HIM TO "PUMP 'EM OUT"



..... IN JANUARY 1966, DYLAN GIVES A LENGTHY INTERVIEW NAT HENTOFF FOR PLAYBOY MAGAZINE. HE GIVES A SURPRISINGLY GOOD INTERVIEW, EVEN THOUGH HE'S A BIT STUCK.



..... HOWEVER, THE PLAYBOY EDITOR HACKS THE INTERVIEW ABOUT SO MUCH THAT DYLAN WITHDRAWS IT COMPLETELY AND, INSTEAD, INTERVIEWS HIMSELF - WITH HENTOFF'S CO-OPERATION - IN WHAT WILL BECOME A SURREAL NON-INTERVIEW.

ANY SPECIAL MESSAGE BOB?

YEAH, SAY HELLO TO MISS JANUARY, AND TELL HER THAT I NEVER REALISED THAT SHE DIDN'T HAVE STAPLES ACROSS HER CHEST IN REAL LIFE!!

MORE SEX 'N'
DRUGS 'N' ROCK
'N' ROLL NEXT
MONTH.

© M. CARTER

★ 27-11-88.



Fare Thee Well

Another issue completed, it is time to look to the future. The next issue should be out on February 1st; it shall not lack for content with the new album, the tribute concert, the "new, new, new **Basement Tapes**" and goodness knows what else by then (another tour methinks). There will be all the regular columns too, with Michael Gray's **A Note On:** now joining **From Behind A Burning Bush** and the others. The **Focus On** will probably come from **Street Legal**. I shall simultaneously be preparing the second subscriber special for which I already have a surfeit of articles! It is intended to be on "Covers and Collaborations", but at the rate I'm accruing material might just be on "Collaborations".

ENJOY the new album, I look forward to meeting you at Leicester - particularly on the Friday as there never is time to chat on the Saturday. If you're not going there, drop me a line and let me know what you think of the album, this issue etc. Keep on keepin' on.

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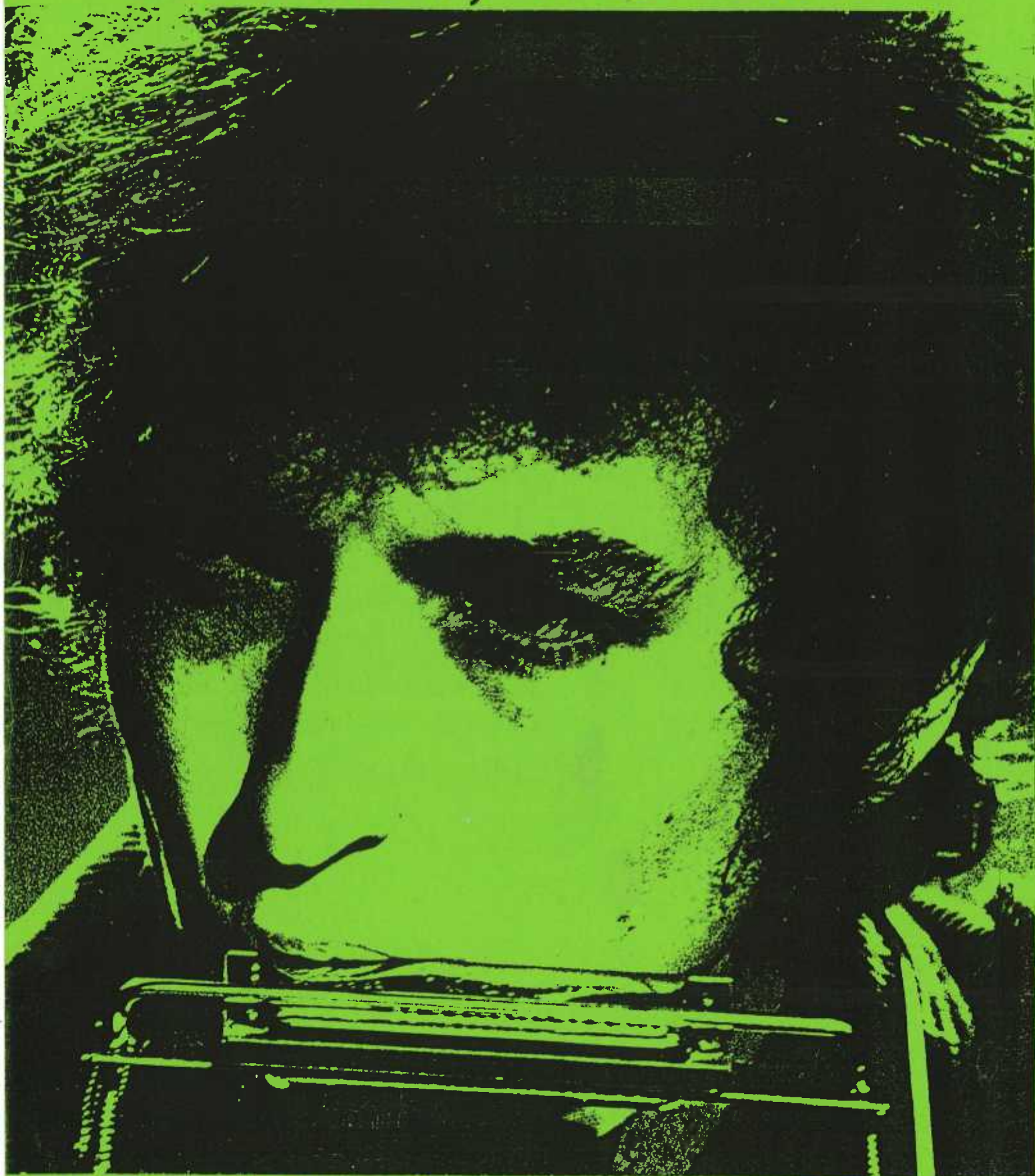
It won't cost you a leg



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Homer, *the slut*



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