

Publisher:
Woodstock Publications

Publication Date:
July 2003

Editor:
Andrew Muir

Contributors:
Alan Davis
Andrew Davies
John Gibbens
Richard Jobs
Martin van Hees
John Morrison
John Perry
David Pichaske
Markus Prieur
Manuel Vardavas
Paul Williams

Design & Layout:
Keith Wootton

Staff Photographer:
Duncan Hume

Subscriptions:
Woodstock Publications
8 Laxton Grange
Bluntisham
Cambridgeshire. PE28 3XU
United Kingdom

E-mail:
info@judasmagazine.com

WebSite:
www.judasmagazine.com

All of the quotations from copyrighted works in this publication are strictly for the purpose of legitimate review and criticism only. The views and opinions expressed are solely those of each individual contributor.

Judas! is published quarterly in January, April, July and October. The subscription will be annual commencing on 1st April each year.

UK £20.00

Europe £22.00/€36.00

USA/Canada \$42.00

Rest of World £28.00

Payment can be accepted by cheque, Postal Order or International Money Order made payable to *Woodstock Publications* or by visiting our website at www.judasmagazine.com and using the online credit card payment service.

All copies are dispatched in board-backed envelopes by 1st class mail with overseas being sent by airmail.

All correspondence concerning this publication should be addressed to:

Woodstock Publications
8 Laxton Grange
Bluntisham
Cambridgeshire.
PE28 3XU
United Kingdom
E-mail: info@judasmagazine.com

from *Inside A Prune*

Hello again and I hope you're all having a happy summer. I find it hard to believe that it is July and *Judas!* issue 6 time already. *Tempus fugit*, indeed. Mind you, if Dylan is opening for a band called the Dead who apparently are the Grateful Dead without Jerry Garcia (a baffling concept even for a non-Deadhead like me) then anything is possible. He'll be opening for Phil Lesh next...

Oh well, there is nothing quite like 'demystifying oneself' is there? Still, there is always the other tendency, the one that leans toward the self-mythologizing and it would appear that the film *Masked & Anonymous* achieves this in a novel and successful way, despite all advance pointers making us fear the worst. If summer tour news does not augur well at least there is plenty of positive news on the cinema front. Most of the reports from those who have seen the film are extremely favourable and - while in no way saying it will appeal to a mainstream audience - *Judas!* is confident on the back of our coverage in issue 5, that it will appeal to more Dylan fans than the early worries would have suggested.

On a personal note it is extremely gratifying to see many of the suppositions I arrive at in various sections in the "Love And Theft" chapter of my book *Troubadour* carried forward into the film and its soundtrack. Clearly the minstrelsy and Civil War themes had not yet been explored as far as Dylan wanted to take them. The interaction of "Cross the Green Mountain" with both his last studio album and now *Masked & Anonymous* throws up interest a-plenty, but the central-to-the-film performance of 'Dixie' is likely to be a fertile debating ground for a much longer time to come, for a wide variety of reasons. (Including some rather nonsensical ones, one fears.) I am also pleased to have included my John Goodman/*Roseanne* footnote to the 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' chapter. One can see why the chance of working with Dylan would pull a sterling performance from Mr. Goodman.

There are other silver screen attractions to come as well. Not only do we have Todd Haynes's unorthodox 'biopic' (with Dylan portrayed by seven different actors, including a woman and an 11-year-old black boy), but our man will also be the subject of a Martin Scorsese documentary that, it is claimed, will 'examine the cultural and political impact of Dylan's music'. Clearly a magnificent opportunity to achieve something meaningful here, fingers crossed it all goes well and we will keep you updated in future issues as to its progress.

There is positive news around on the book front too, albeit with the disappointing, if not unexpected, continual putting back of the publication date for *Chronicles*. Paul Williams's chapter that kicks off this issue is from his long-awaited, now imminent, book. He informs us that it 'is approaching completion'. There are now only a few

months left for you to advance order a limited edition hardcover for \$60 and get your names listed in the book as 'Subscribers'. For more details email paul@caddy.com

Almost upon us now is the even longer heralded book on Dylan by Christopher Ricks. Issue 7 of *Judas!* will feature a review of this critical analysis from a recognised literary authority by the Dylan world's own voice of lyrical authority, Michael Gray. Meanwhile, Stephen Scobie's *Alias Revisited* has still to come out. When it does we will be running a special interview with Stephen to mark its release, as well as featuring an excerpt or two.

Speaking of excerpts from forthcoming books, John Hinchey is already well into his follow-up to the excellent *Like A Complete Unknown*. Given it is written in his spare time, however, it will be some time before it hits the streets so *Judas!* will be badgering him for chapters of that as he progresses and we are delighted to say that his thoughts on 'Tangled Up in Blue' will also adorn issue 7.

There is good news too on the photography front. Duncan Hume has been providing us with a slew of top quality pictures, some of which adorn this very issue. As we know how much you enjoyed the last 'spread' of his photographs that we did, we are aiming to do another one soon. Regular contributor to *Judas!*, John Hume also has welcome news. There was a change recently to the photo of Dylan being used for concert posters etc. The new one is a live shot taken by John who was told that Bob had chosen the photo himself, something you'd imagine would make him as happy as happy can be.

I have reminded you in a few editorials of my overall vision for *Judas!* and am loath to repeat it all again (though I need to do so every now and then for all the newcomers to the magazine). Suffice to say for now that John Perry's understandable-even-to-a-non-muso-like-me article on Dylan's acoustic guitar playing in 1966 and David Pichaske's concluding chapter on Dylan's language are especially pleasing in our commitment to bringing you authoritative articles on 'music' and 'voice' as well as our more manifold expressions of the same on 'lyrics' and 'performance'.

Enjoy issue 6, so bulging with material that we are using our website as overspill. There you will find, amongst other things, letters from Sheila Clarke, ending with a question oft raised by myself plus Toby Richards-Carpenter pointing out the positives I missed in my review of Olof's books, as I was hoping someone would. Easy to follow log-in instructions for the subscriber-only section of the website are on screen at www.judasmagazine.com

Cheers for now,

Andrew Muir

Contents

Number
Six

- 5** **Determined To Stand**
by Paul Williams
- 28** **A Series Of Dreams**
by Alan Davis
- 33** **“Tune, Tune, Tune”**
by John Perry
- 38** **Barb Jungr Interview**
conducted by John Morrison
- 41** **Bob Dylan - The Classic Interviews 1965 - 1966**
by Andrew Muir
- 43** **A Different Set Of Rules**
by Markus Prieur
- 47** **Temples In Flames**
by Manuel Vardavas
- 49** **Some Notes On Bob Dylan ‘And the Language...’ Part 2**
by David Pichaske
- 60** **The Double Entry System and the Roots of Protest**
by Andrew Davies
- 64** **Deep River...**
by Richard Jobs
- 70** **Philosophical Reflections**
by Martin van Hees
- 73** **We Walk The Line**
by John Gibbens
- Photo Credits:**

Front cover, inside front cover & inside back cover, New Orleans Jazz Fest 25th April 2003; Back cover, New Orleans 26th April 2003; Page 20, Wembley 17th October 1987 - All Duncan Hume

Determined To Stand

by Paul Williams

In the 1997 *Newsweek* cover story (*Dylan Lives*), after Dylan told the reporter that ten years earlier he'd 'kind of reached the end of the line' and 'couldn't do his old songs' onstage, he spoke of a very specific (and dramatic) turning point. According to the interviewer, David Gates:

Then, in October 1987, playing Locarno, Switzerland, with Tom Petty's band and the female singers he now says he used to hide behind, Dylan had his breakthrough. It was an outdoor show - he remembers the fog and the wind - and as he stepped to the mike, a line came into his head. 'It's almost like I heard it as a voice. It wasn't like it was even me thinking it. I'm determined to stand, whether God will deliver me or not. And all of a sudden everything just exploded. It exploded every which way. And I noticed that all the people out there - I was used to them looking at the girl singers, they were good-looking girls, you know? And like I say, I had them up there so I wouldn't feel so bad. But when that happened, nobody was looking at the girls anymore. They were looking at the main mike. After that is when I sort of knew: I've got to go out and play these songs. That's just what I must do.' He's been at it ever since.

Locarno, October 5, was the 21st show of the fall '87 tour. Of course, you can't hear everything exploding on the tape, any more than you can hear the voice in Dylan's head saying, 'I'm determined to stand, whether God will deliver me or not.' But the first encore certainly seems like a reference to and restatement of that crucial moment: 'Trust yourself...look not for answers where no answers can be found...You've got to trust yourself?'

Why did everything explode? Because the man had an awakening, one that had been in process, had been coming, for a long time. Because it was the end of doubt, the end of the ambivalence the singer had been wrestling with all year. It was - in terms of Bob Dylan's relationship with the world, with his audiences, the public - the death or end of Billy Parker. The arrival of a man who finally knows, beyond any doubt or second-guessing, what his purpose is: 'I've got to go out and play these songs. That's just what I must do.'

'He's been at it ever since,' indeed! 'You're either a player or you're not a player. It didn't really occur to me until we did those shows with the Grateful Dead.' Those shows were the turning point...but the memorable moment of awakening came a few months later, on a stage set up in a market square in a small town on the shores of a lake in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. 'It poured and poured with rain, but it was a beautiful show indeed,' reported John Bauldie of the Dylan magazine *The Telegraph*.

'It wasn't like it was even me thinking it.' Okay, but surely 'whether God will deliver me or not' is not a line that would

have come up from the subconscious of, or otherwise come into the head of, a person who hadn't ever wished or prayed for God to deliver him.

What does the line mean? Well, the beauty of these words that Bob Dylan heard in his head in Locarno is that they are as resonant and open to interpretation as any Dylan lyric. So they mean whatever the listener hears them as meaning when he or she encounters them. But if we do attempt to shovel this glimpse into the ditch of what 'God will deliver me' means, it certainly makes sense for us to look into Bob Dylan's favorite collection of sacred writings, the Bible. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:13) asks God to 'deliver us from evil.' *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (a four-volume encyclopedia published in Nashville, Tennessee in 1962) has an entry under 'Deliverer, The' which says: 'The principle theme of the Bible is God's deliverance of mankind from the power of sin, death, and Satan through his action in Jesus Christ; and this mighty deliverance is foreshadowed in the history of God's people Israel by his deliverance of them from such disasters as Egyptian bondage or Babylonian exile. But the English words 'deliver' and 'deliverance' are not very frequent in our English versions of the Bible, the idea of deliverance being more usually expressed by other words, particularly 'salvation,' 'redemption,' and their cognates.'

To me, the words Dylan heard sound like a response to recurrent episodes of anxiety ('he goes into an all-too-convincing imitation of panic'). What made this moment onstage a break-

through was presumably the unconditional decision and determination to stand. In context, this seems to me to mean not only to stand on stage and perform, but to brace himself against his own anxiety, as if standing in the surf and allowing a large wave to go by. And because the first thing he noticed after everything exploded was 'all the people out there' looking at him rather than at the girls 'he now says he used to hide behind,' I tend to think the breakthrough had to do with his perception of, and therefore relationship with, his live audiences. So it is noteworthy that one of the more powerful performances on the Locarno tape is 'Seeing the Real You at Last' ('I'm still trying to get used to seeing the real you at last!').

Among the recordings of the fall '87 shows, Locarno can be considered a fairly typical example of what these shows were like. The second and third songs are 'Like a Rolling Stone' and 'Maggie's Farm,' as was the case at nine of these 30 shows (six other shows featured the same songs in first and second position; so this brief sequence is characteristic of the tour, having been featured at half the shows, starting in Göteborg, Sweden on September 25). Dylan played fourteen songs at Locarno, also quite normal for the tour. No song was played at all of these shows ('Rolling Stone' and 'Maggie's' come closest, at 23 appearances each). But Locarno does offer quite a few of the most 'typical' fall '87 choices: 'Dead Man, Dead Man' (played at 17 of these shows), 'Rainy Day Women' (16 shows, but as an opener, as it was at Locarno, at only two other

shows), 'Shot of Love' (14 shows), 'Ballad of a Thin Man' (13 shows), 'Simple Twist of Fate' (12 shows), 'Seeing the Real You at Last' (12 shows), 'Watching the River Flow' (11 shows), 'Tomorrow Is a Long Time' (11 shows), 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight' (eight shows), and 'Blowin' in the Wind' (nine shows, but as a closer, as it was at Locarno, at only two other shows). To be a typical fall '87 show, Locarno also had to include a relative rarity or two, and it did: 'The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest' (played at only four fall '87 shows) and 'Trust Yourself' (played three times on this tour). Also, as at almost all of these shows, Roger McGuinn of the Byrds came onstage and joined Dylan and the band on guitar for the encore songs. (McGuinn opened the Temples in Flames shows with a solo set. He would be joined partway through by Petty and the Heartbreakers, who would then play an opening set of their own. When Dylan included 'Chimes of Freedom' in his segment of the show - as he did ten times, but not in Locarno - McGuinn would sing it with him.)

To be considered a fairly representative example of the fall 1987 Dylan/Heartbreakers shows, Locarno would have to have included a show-stopping performance of Dylan singing 'Tomorrow Is a Long Time' without the band, backed only by Tench on piano and Campbell on guitar - and it did, a particularly fine example of the species. This impressive moment of good theater and excellent music was a feature of the fall '87 tour, starting at Göteborg on September 25. Dylan and Campbell and Tench

performed 'Tomorrow' together at the next two shows; then for three shows they replaced it with a three-man 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right'. Thereafter they played one or the other in this fashion for the rest of the tour, except for seven concerts that either included both of these songs performed this way, or one of the two with an alternate companion: 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' or 'To Ramona.'

Although each of these Dylan/Campbell/Tench showcases is rewarding, 'Tomorrow Is a Long Time' is, time and again, the most dramatic and memorable, a performance that characterizes the fall 1987 concerts for anyone who attended one of the eleven 'Tomorrow' shows. On this tour, and on the summer tour with the Grateful Dead, Bob Dylan did not include a solo acoustic set or song as he had in 1986 and 1984 and 1981, and on most of his tours since he stopped playing solo acoustic concerts in 1965. These stripped-down three-man performances (no rhythm section, no backup singers) take the place of those solo acoustic interludes, as though Dylan is pleased to have found a way to make an equivalent aesthetic statement without just 'giving the audience what they want' (though of course he does provide concertgoers with a similar thrill when he plays a long harmonica solo at the beginning of various fall '87 songs).

Yes, Dylan does want to please audiences, but his first commitment as an artist and performer is to maintain an aesthetic space around himself in which he feels free of the pressure of anyone

else's expectations. 'There's but so many people an I just cant please them all,' as he said in a handwritten prologue to his 1973 book *Writings and Drawings*. For me, these three-player 'Tomorrow Is a Long Time' performances not only evoke the 21-year-old artist (and lover) who wrote and first sang this song in 1962, but also conjure images of Bob Dylan on his 1978 big-band tour singing 'Tangled Up in Blue' accompanied only by keyboards and saxophone, trying on the stage identity of crooner, happily exploring the plasticity of his song and of his persona and chosen art form. At moments - definitely including the Locarno 'Tomorrow' and the song's debut in this form at Göteborg - these 1987 performances of 'Tomorrow' seem more romantic and (in the best sense of the word) nostalgic and dramatic than if Dylan were singing the song alone, accompanying himself on harmonica and acoustic guitar. These 1987 performances speak of the present, including Bob Dylan's relationship with his audience and with the endless highway and crooked trail of the performing artist, at the same time that they speak of the singer's and the listeners' pasts and dreamed-of futures.

'Whether God will deliver me or not!' It is interesting to speculate about what these words meant to Bob Dylan when they came into his head. Are they an expression of doubt as to God's existence or of His love? Or are they rather a reflection of the speaker's private doubts about his own worthiness of deliverance (still drinkin', dopin' and wenching, still proud after all these years)? In either case, Bob Dylan on October 5, 1987 was determined

to stand against his own anxiety/stage fright, and as a result we have the Never-Ending Tour of the subsequent thirteen-plus years, a truly extraordinary body of work.¹

‘It wasn’t like it was even me thinking it.’ This is closely related to what Dylan has told us about how his remarkable songs have come to and through him. In 1968, in an interview with John Cohen for *Sing Out!* magazine, Dylan said:

Then of course, there are times you just pick up an instrument - something will come, like a tune or some kind of wild line will just come into your head and you’ll develop that... Whatever it brings out in the voice, you’ll write those words down. And they might not mean anything to you at all, and you just go on, and that will be what happens.

In the same interview, when asked about the germ that started him writing ‘I Pity the Poor Immigrant,’ Dylan said, ‘the first line.’ Cohen asked, ‘What experience might have triggered that? Like you kicked the cat, who ran away, who said ‘Ouch!’ which reminded you of an immigrant.’ Dylan answered, ‘To tell you the truth, I have no idea how it comes into my mind.’ It wasn’t like it was even him thinking it...

The Locarno tape is fairly typical of the Temples in Flames tour in terms of quality as well as song selection. Indeed, it illustrates why there is not much agreement amongst tape collectors or commentators or people who attended the shows as to how good or bad this tour and the performances on these tapes were and are. Most of the Locarno performances, like

the majority of the fall ’87 performances, I would describe as ‘good but not great.’ That means it pretty much depends on the mood of the person listening whether Locarno’s ‘I’ll Be Your Baby Tonight,’ for example, is rated as disappointing, not very well played or sung (the tempo, probably set by Dylan on rhythm guitar, seems plodding, and the band performance uninspired), or as delightful, full of little pleasures (the long band/harmonica intro, Dylan’s improvised lyrics - ‘Close the blinds, close the gate; what about tonight? It will have to wait’ - and the way he says ‘mockingbird’). Is this another wonderful ‘Simple Twist of Fate’ or does it feel like he’s just going through the motions? Not a great ‘Like a Rolling Stone,’ certainly, but quite gratifying if you open yourself to it or if it catches you at the right moment.

The audience members’ and commentators’ appraisals of these shows were, as usual, influenced by what they were expecting (based on their images of Dylan from the 1960s and 70s or on their experiences of his previous European tours in 1978 and the 1980s) and by their responses to his physical appearance and his presentation of himself. ‘He was in fine form,’ John Lindley wrote in late 1987 about the seven shows in England that ended the ’87 tour:

Contrary to what most newspaper reviews reported - and the writers, almost without exception, seemed to equate Dylan’s not speaking [to the audience between songs] with his not caring, either about his performance or about his audience - the shows were high energy. No sooner did the lights

dim at the close of one song than Dylan was attacking the next.

It's ironic that the performer's keen interest in the relationship between the elements of his creation (his attention to the segues between songs – another example of Dylan being influenced by watching the Grateful Dead in concert) made him appear uncommitted to many observers, because his interest in good segues, along with his struggle with stage fright, influenced him to omit the customary flattery of talking to the audience between songs. I've already quoted Patrick Humphries' comments on the tour, in which 'what looked like a raccoon living in his hair' seems related to Humphries' judgment that Dylan's delivery of his songs 'was now sloppy to the point of incoherence.' All of us listeners and observers are of course influenced in our experiences and sincere appraisals by many such factors. Andrew Muir wrote in a letter to me in October 2000 about his recollections of Dylan's 1987 shows: 'There was an attractive fragility to his yearning vocals but a frightening look about him. I was too worried about his appearance to fully like the shows. I thought I'd never see him again.'

It is appropriate, in the light of Dylan's 1997 account of his epiphany in Switzerland ('I noticed that all the people out there were looking at the main mike'), that the one unequivocally great performance on the Locarno tape is a sort of collaboration between Dylan and the 'people out there.' Dylan's delivery of the first few lines of 'Tomorrow Is a Long Time' ('If today was not an endless

highway/ If tonight was not a crooked trail/ If tomorrow wasn't such a long time/ Lonesome would mean nothing to you at all...') is particularly moving, as though this were an invocation, a prayer, that has great meaning to him at this moment. Near the end of the first verse the audience begins clapping slowly, providing a rhythmic pulse that becomes very audible with the start of the next verse, so loud and so full of feeling that Dylan's singing and Campbell's and Tench's playing seem to rest on and lean into that pulse throughout the rest of the performance. It's a magical effect.

Performers of spontaneous music usually acknowledge the part played by a live audience in the collective act of creation; but seldom is the audience's part so audible and measurable. 'There's beauty in the silver, singin' river,' Dylan sings, and on the recording of this performance it's as though we can hear that river, certain that just this once the singer *can* see his reflection in the waters and hear the echo of his footsteps (and maybe hear his true love's heart a-softly pounding). Magical. There is ensemble audience clapping during other fall '87 performances of this song, but never with quite the sonic and musical result heard on the Locarno recording. This, we might surmise, is why Dylan must go out and play these songs: because something new can happen every time he does.

'You might be a professor, in some rock school,' Dylan seems to sing at the start of 'Gotta Serve Somebody' in Munich, September 30, 1987. Of course I thought he was talking to me ('But Bob, I

couldn't be, I'm a college dropout like yourself), until I listened more carefully and decided that what he's saying is: 'You might be a confessor in some rotten school...' Munich, the 17th concert of the Temples in Flames tour, four shows before Locarno, is and was a particularly good performance, a very rewarding show. All students in my school will please listen to it a few times and then write essays on 'Who Bob Dylan thought he was in fall 1987 (on a stage in the capital of Bavaria).'

I like the sequence that opens this concert: 'Joey,' 'Seeing the Real You at Last,' 'Like a Rolling Stone.' If Bob Dylan thought of his set lists as messages to his audience, what inference might he want us to make from his choice of these three songs from his huge songbook, in this sequence, as the beginning of his show tonight?

1: 'Joey.' It's a story, the rise and fall of a gangster (told as though he were a hero to the teller). 2: 'Seeing the Real You at Last.' It's a love song, built around a phrase as universally applicable in love situations as 'don't think twice, it's all right.' Neither of these songs were hits. They're fairly obscure songs from lesser-known albums (*Desire*, *Empire Burlesque*), whereas the third selection is a signature song, Bob Dylan's biggest hit and a song that somehow seems to be about the times that he symbolizes in the eyes of many (in Munich and in Tel Aviv and London and Philadelphia): 'Like a Rolling Stone.' 'How does it *feel*?' 'I'm still trying to get used to seeing the real you at last.' 'Joey... Joey... King of the streets, child of clay...'

Maybe he wants to tell us (and himself) that there's more to him than just the songs he's famous for? The first two songs date from 1976 and 1985, respectively; so maybe the message is that he respects and values all his work equally, regardless of era of origin. 'Joey,' he told us in the *Song Talk* interview, is Homeric. That resonates nicely with this image from 'Seeing the Real You at Last': 'I sailed through the storm, strapped to the mast.' It's Odysseus! - still trying to get used to how it feels to be on his own, like a complete unknown, with no direction home. Interesting that the fourth song in this Munich sequence seems to be about Penelope: 'Come in', she said, 'I'll give you shelter from the storm.'

In 1978 Dylan said of the Egyptian Umm Kulthum, 'She was one of my favorite singers of all time, and I don't understand a word she sings!' This suggests that he recognizes and appreciates that the human voice is an expressive instrument that can speak powerfully to a receptive listener, even when the words being sung have no more verbal or narrative meanings for him or her than the sounds made by other musical instruments; that singing is an art that exists beyond words, even though words are its primary medium. In her book *The Voice of Egypt*, about Umm Kulthum and Arabic song, Virginia Danielson writes that in Arabic culture 'a good singer is a *mutrib*, one who creates an environment of *tarab* with his or her performance. Excellent rendition generates *tarab*, literally 'enchantment,' the sense of having been deeply moved by the music.'

Bob Dylan is a *mutrib*, and the first four songs of Munich '87 are a good example of his ability to generate *tarab*. Mysteriously, he achieves this with a rendition that is far from excellent by many perfectly reasonable standards. He swallows words and phrases repeatedly throughout this performance of 'Joey,' which would be disconcerting if one were hearing the song for the first time and attempting to understand and follow the story. What excuse is there for a storyteller to mumble like that? Only the excuse that he's singing freely and spontaneously and sincerely, and the slurred words are part of that, a peculiar by-product of his concentration on creating *tarab*. When the result is a genuinely enchanting performance, what purpose would it serve to complain about his apparent sloppiness or lack of excellence? Instead we might as well admit that it's normal for masters to break the rules and leave observers baffled at how they manage to get such great results anyway (not all the time, but often enough to make us doubt our pictures of how things ought to work).

When my students hand in their papers about the Munich tape (or CD) and who Bob Dylan thought he was at this moment in his performing life, I expect (if my students are sincere) a wide range of opinions regarding the worthiness of Dylan's intentions and achievement in this concert performance. There is much to complain about in this show (and in most of the shows from this tour) and much more to be delighted by, to fall in love with - and it's all happening at the same time. Students pointing to the flaws

in Dylan's singing of 'Joey' (and during the rest of the show), and students pointing to examples of Dylan's vocal artistry and charm, might well find themselves pointing to the same verses and phrases, the same musical moments. Why these contradictory assessments? I'm glad you asked. I'm not sure I can give a clear answer, but I'm certain the answer is at the heart of Bob Dylan's accomplishments as a performing artist and who this man thought he was that night in the Olympiahalle in München.

I think he thought of himself as an artist - not in any pretentious sense, but in the sense that Bob Dylan probably thinks of a horn-player or drummer in a Mississippi juke joint blues band as an artist, a person keenly aware of the work of creative expression that he is participating in, and his responsibilities to the music and to the band as a whole (and to the audience, in the sense that the music and the audience are not separable in the musician's mind). And I believe he found delight in his work, when he wrote this set list and while he and the Heartbreakers and the Queens were on stage playing and singing... and that this delight is what fuels the charm that radiates from him and from the music he and his troupe are making. He's having a great time, and as a result so are we.

Charm, in my opinion, is at the heart of Dylan's accomplishments as an artist, and I specifically include his 'greatest hits,' the 1965 ensemble performances of 'Like a Rolling Stone' and 'Maggie's Farm' and 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' and solo performances of 'Mr. Tambourine Man'

and 'It's Alright, Ma.' We the public had never heard songs or music or even poems like these before, but we were struck by them immediately, by the sounds of the words and of the music and of the performances. He charmed us, enchanted us. It's his gift.

'Clarity of articulation' is one of the many virtues frequently mentioned by Arab music-lovers praising Umm Kulthum's singing. And indeed Dylan's clarity of articulation was one of the characteristics that previously made me praise his Modena performance of 'Joey' so highly. Then how can I be so charmed by this Munich version full of slurred phrases and swallowed words? I think the answer lies in the feeling of the musical performance as a whole, which is not impeded by the singer's strange diction - in fact, it is even possible that the sound of Dylan's voice, as in the case of the 1965 ensemble performances just mentioned, is the vehicle by which his particular mood and intent, unique to this performance and this moment, are communicated to the other musicians and singers so that the end result is a collective creation with a spirit all its own...words and instruments and voices and rhythm all working together to share a mysterious and urgent truth. In Modena, Dylan told the story of Joey Gallo like a champion. In Munich, he's using this vehicle to share something different, something that clearly arises from his love of the song and his self-discovery in the process of performing it with his troupe to open this particular night's musical journey.

When I noticed Dylan's radical slurring of the line 'Whatever you're gonna

do' (it becomes a gentle moan) near the end of Munich's 'Seeing the Real You,' I realized that one of the reasons he does this is he's trying to make a certain sound with his mouth, his voice, which feels right to him at this moment. Each musical phrase created by the ensemble calls forth what each individual player does next.

On the other hand, the fact that the two most noticeably swallowed phrases early in 'Joey' ('of whatever side there was' and 'Joey almost hit the roof') occur at the precise same location in terms of song structure and rhythm of vocal performance - second half of the third line of an eight-line verse - strongly suggests that this swallowing or holding back is related to Dylan's intuitive sense of where he is in the metrical cadence and narrative drama of these lines. Here he doesn't seem directed by the sounds he's hearing from the ensemble but by the pulse of the song's structure and language. The logic of his bizarre delivery (which continues in this fashion throughout the concert, lots of slurred vocals and swallowed phrases - the latter sounding as though they've been half-erased from the tape) seems to me reminiscent of the vocal mannerisms of a Shakespearean actor, for whom the felt pulse of the language and of each dramatic scene may take precedence even over his beloved clarity of articulation. 'The quality of mercy is not strained! It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven, mumble mumble...'

When my hypothetical students get their essays back, they'll find that the professor believes the key to who Dylan thought he was this night in Bavaria is

found in the segues between the songs...if you mention them, as John Lindley did, you get an A-plus. Dylan was trying to create something - an environment of *tarab*, even if he didn't know that Arabic term - and he carefully and probably gleefully rehearsed these segues, with the conscious intent of creating a mood and of never losing it once he got it going.

The first of the 12 Munich segues goes like this: Dylan and the Queens sing another stirring, ennobling chorus of 'Joey... Joey... What makes them want to come and blow you away?'...thrilling me with the interplay of their voices and the feeling that all of this, each time they sing this chorus together, is an exploration and portrait of what performed music is and can be for Bob Dylan. We listeners are given the opportunity to meditate on why the singer/author has changed this chorus line to the present tense at this series of shows, as though Joey's death were not a historical event, not something in the past that happened only once. (Maybe he's suggesting that the question is not about the motivations of these specific killers, but rather about human nature in general: what makes them/us want to come and blow someone away?) In any case, we are brought into the present moment ourselves as the last joint vocalization of 'away' is extended by guitars and keyboards and subtle harmony voices into a wash of sound that feels like a resolution - except for the seductive and rhythmic blues guitar notes that are arising out of it, new life beginning ("busy being born") even as the song we were focused on is still fading away.

It's a wonderful musical transition, imbuing us with feelings of loss for the trance we were just in, and simultaneously with feelings of anticipation about the new one we're being pulled into - so that the feelings combine and all we know is, he's got us and it's very engaging. 'I thought the rain would cool things down, but it looks like it don't. I'd like to get you to change your mind, but it looks like you won't.' Yeah! 'From now on I'll be busy, ain't going nowhere fast...' Can you see why Dylan loves to perform these songs (with these players) so much? They seem to always find new ways to speak for him and to him about what he's feeling and doing right now. The spell-weaver is also enchanted. 'Ain't going nowhere fast.' Thirty seconds and much charming music later I like the way he says, 'I don't mind a reasonable amount of trouble, trouble always comes to pass.' Twenty seconds further he's singing, 'I'm tired of this bag of tricks,' but we know and feel that that isn't true.

Since the words to 'Seeing the Real You' are taken from Bogart films [see *Performing Artist Two*, chapter 16], it's reasonable to suppose the performer sees it as a Bogart movie (starring himself, with Lauren Bacall as 'you'). 'Joey' of course is a gangster film (a 'streets of New York' story); and if we listen to the words and this Munich performance, asking ourselves what made this guy a hero to this songwriter, I think the answer must be: his style. ('He walked right into the clubhouse of his lifelong deadly foe...said, 'Tell 'em it was Crazy Joe.' 'He pushed the table over to protect his family.' At one

point we're even told that 'he dressed like Jimmy Cagney.')

And of course Bob Dylan, our projectionist for the evening, doesn't miss a beat when he conducts his band and audience from 'Real You' into 'Like a Rolling Stone.' Another great segue. Bob and girls sing a final 'at last' with an inflection signifying the period at the end of a sentence; the band follows with wrap-up notes, which also turn out to be start-up notes as the recognizable melody of 'Like a Rolling Stone' tiptoes in, soon joined by purposeful drumbeats. The singer slurs 'Once upon a time' and suddenly it's, 'y'dressed so fine, [swallow] bums a dime, in your prime, didn't you?' Melody notes and drumbeats continue the buildup and the singer slurs and punctuates: 'people call, say beware Doll, yr bound t'fall, y' thought they were all, kiddin' you!' and we're in another world, familiar and very wonderful and clearly connected to the Bogart movie we were swimming in a moment ago.

It's a new kind of 'Like a Rolling Stone' - the fall '87 evolution of the song, in its exemplary Munich manifestation. I like the sound of Dylan's voice every time he reenters from a short instrumental flourish: 'You used to laugh about' and 'You never turned around' and 'Princess on the steeple...' Every inflection matters, as if we can watch the painter dip his brush in just the right color and splash it on with conviction. It's the sort of performance where short phrases jump forward - 'so amused,' 'to conceal' - either via emphasis or understatement. So it's fun to listen to again and again (as are 'Joey' and 'Real You' and almost every-

thing else until the encores). And the little delights only serve to emphasize how much it's all one big musical pleasure, every musician and singer and syllable contributing to the overall Cinerama effect.

This 'slow rocker' version of 'Like a Rolling Stone' ends with suitably understated climactic glory, and after the closing drum flourish, the sustain of the various instruments segues into tentative yet purposeful (and familiar) rhythm guitar notes, soon joined by similarly exploratory and familiar harmonica chords, little bursts of harmonica-sound dancing with the piano notes that have walked onstage simultaneously. The harmonica in-breaths and the piano and guitar notes become steadily more expressive, and then the latter provide a platform for the singer, who enters at 1:21: 'Twas in another lifetime, one of toil and blood...' Dylan sings 'Shelter from the Storm' with a lot of feeling tonight. Maybe he needs it, or he thinks that Joey does, or that Bacall or the princess on the steeple do (or he's hoping one of those two might provide it).

The fourth segue is a real surprise. Were you expecting to hear 'Dark Star' tonight? As early as Tel Aviv, there are indications on 'Tangled Up in Blue' that Dylan must have said to the Heartbreakers something like, 'Can you guys get more of a Grateful Dead sound on this one?' Not that he wanted them to play an arrangement he and the Dead had worked out for this song earlier in the summer, but that Dylan was yearning, after watching and enjoying the Dead's performances before his sets with them, to achieve a sound for

himself something like what he heard the Dead doing with their own songs. He didn't achieve that during the Dylan/Dead sets, but the aspiration was still in him as he rehearsed and played with the Heartbreakers, and somehow 'Tangled Up in Blue' became the fall '87 song on which the Heartbreakers (or just Mike Campbell at first) tried to find a way to give the boss what he was requesting. I deduce this from the unmistakable 'Jerry Garcia guitar notes' that can be heard from Campbell on every fall '87 'Tangled,' starting with the Tel Aviv show. I speculate that this could have started as a joke on Campbell's part - 'Okay, you want the Dead sound?' So he throws in an adept Garcia imitation here and there in the song, playing high single notes in a scale or mode that produces guitar notes and noodlings that are recognizably the sound of Jerry Garcia. He does it well, and works it into the evolving fall '87 Dylan/Heartbreakers version of the song intelligently and tastefully. If someone played you one of these performances and said it was from the Dylan/Dead tour, you'd very likely believe them (though in fact there isn't any trademark Garcia guitar stuff on the Dylan/Dead performances of 'Tangled').

In any case, by Munich 'Tangled Up in Blue' had metamorphosed into a number with a sound quite reminiscent in significant ways of the Dead's signature performance song 'Dark Star.' This is particularly noticeable in the intro. The Heartbreakers don't play the identifiable 'Dark Star' intro (and theme) chords, but otherwise they are quite clearly in the same unique musical territory - playing

Grateful Dead music, as the Dead almost never managed to with Dylan, except for a few special moments like the Eugene 'Queen Jane.'

By taking special care, as he did at Munich and many fall '87 shows, to assure that the band would never stop playing between songs, that there would always be a flowing transition from one song to the next, a musical continuity, bandleader Bob Dylan was making an aesthetic statement - one the Grateful Dead made at every show and one which Dylan himself had made before, notably on the 1976 segment of his Rolling Thunder Revue tour (documented on the album *Hard Rain*). This statement is that songs performed live in a concert are not separate entities. For tonight, for this hour and a quarter that we're together, they all become one song - like a novel or a movie containing many characters and stories and themes and settings, all of which are connected by being part of the same sequenced experience, the time you spend reading this novel or watching this movie or listening to this concert.

By paying attention to the beginnings and endings of his songs and to the segues between them in performance, Dylan is in the tradition of many great artists who have playfully experimented with and called attention to the conceptual forms in which their work is perceived and presented. The painter Henri Matisse, for example, liked to make the 'mistake' in some of his paintings of a person's head or arm being cut off by the edge of the canvas. Françoise Gilot comments on Matisse's self-portrait *Conversation*, in

which the crown of his head is thus cut off:

He clearly meant to say that since his intelligence and reason were all over the canvas, in each part of it equally and in the whole totally, it could not be found in the imitative representation of the upper part of his skull within the picture.

Similarly, Dylan the performer uses the edges of the forms he works within to declare his own freedom and to remind observers that aesthetic and emotional truth is not limited by the conventions of perception. In writing and performing set lists, he often wants to convey that the protagonists of his songs might all be the same person and in any given case might or might not be himself...and that the world portrayed musically and lyrically in a song or concert might be this very place we're in right now and/or the backdrop for one interconnected never-ending story.

'Twas in another lifetime...' is a good beginning for a story-song that follows another that began, 'Once upon a time...' This storytelling motif is continued in the opening lines of the fifth Munich song: 'Early one morning the sun was shining, and he was laying in bed...' Dylan the performer discovered fairly early in his relationship with 'Tangled Up in Blue' that this first-person lyric could be changed on the spur of the moment to a third-person narrative and that he could switch persons and pronouns from show to show as a way of further exploring and challenging his and his audiences' relationships with the protagonists of these tales.

This night in Munich, in a gesture typical of this tour (typical because it is not easy for us to know whether to consider this an expression of artistic freedom or of forgetfulness), he shifts persons in mid-song, so that it goes from 'he was laying in bed' and 'rain fallin' on his shoes' to 'I stopped in for a beer' and 'I muttered something underneath my breath.' This last line is amusing and revealing, because again in this song, Dylan swallows a number of words, so that in the line 'he seen a lot of women' the word 'women' is barely audible. No doubt Bob Dylan often does mutter something underneath his breath when accosted by a stranger who asks, 'Hey, don't I know you?' After developing a technique like that you might even find yourself using it in performance. In any event, the free-wheelin' Bob Dylan, while certainly leaving himself open to charges of sloppiness, sings this song with a lot of presence and panache this evening.

Listening to the Munich 'Shelter from the Storm,' I found myself very struck by this mind-out-of-time line: 'If I could only turn back the clock to when God and her were born...' 'Wow,' I muttered underneath my breath, 'the two great loves of his life!!' Jesus Christ, of course, and Sara Lowndes. Sara because 'Shelter from the Storm' is from *Blood on the Tracks*, a song cycle clearly arising from the songwriter's difficult break-up with the woman he'd been married to for eight years. In that context, I've always heard 'Shelter' as a semi-autobiographical tribute to the remarkable woman who came into Dylan's life at a time when he really was

burned out from exhaustion and blown out on the trail of youthful stardom. At a moment when 'now there's a wall between us,' it would be natural to wish oneself back to when she was newly born into your life and there were no walls of miscommunication at all. When Dylan wrote the song, he hadn't yet had the equivalent experience of Jesus coming into his life, so the phrase 'when God and her were born' was probably just free-wheelin' cleverness, a facile and well-turned phrase that might come to mean much more to him (or me) at a time when the singer was feeling a wall between himself and his other Savior.

The first four songs at Munich '87, from 'Born in Red Hook, Brooklyn, in the year of who-knows-when' (the opening lines of 'Joey') to 'I'll give you shelter from the storm' (the final words of 'Shelter,' after the 'when God and her were born' verse) can be heard as a hero's journey, a hero not encumbered by time and corporeality as we know them. In the next three songs, Dylan and the Heartbreakers take us on another sort of journey - a journey, as was customary on the autumn '87 tour, through a sequence of musical landscapes.

The mind - and heart-opening power of this sequence becomes evident as we experience the fifth Munich segue, in which the lovely modal music of this unique version of 'Tangled Up in Blue' gently falls apart Grateful-Dead-style and, as the audience starts to cheer, is abruptly and tenderly replaced by the crisp blues-rock guitar notes and reggae rhythm section intro of Dylan and the Heartbreakers' 1987-style 'I and I.' This

knitting-together-by-segue causes that part of our minds that responds to the pictures and stories evoked by the words of the songs to recognize the first line of 'I and I', 'Been so long since a strange woman slept in my bed,' as a possible continuation of the story-of-my-life-as-a-series-of-man/woman-interactions theme of 'Tangled Up in Blue.' Clearly and delightfully we're in a whole new musical landscape, but the connectedness between the story-songs is as tangible as the contrast between musical settings and 'feels' is evident and delightful.

Dylan and the Heartbreakers and the Queens sing and play 'I and I' with charming spirit and many colorful flourishes, including some fine guitar solos. Listeners may find themselves contemplating the implications of the chorus ('one says to the other' might be about the relationship between me and me, parts of myself) with new insight, as they possibly notice lyrical parallels between the preceding song and this one ('still on the road, headin' for another joint'/'still pushing myself along the road, the darkest part') ('she opened up a book of poems and handed it to me'/'took a stranger to teach me to look into justice's beautiful face'). But most of all it's the contrasting and harmonious musical worlds evoked that make this sequence so magical. And then this opening gambit is trumped emphatically when an elaborate 90-second 'I and I' finale (eighteen quick and bouncy repetitions of 'sees my face and lives,' the last line of the last chorus, followed by another 45 seconds of three slow and dramatically stretched-out SMF&Ls) ends

with a closing drum flourish and, as no doubt predetermined by the bandleader, Benmont jumps in *very* quickly to start playing the melody of the next number.

A few seconds later the harmonica player jumps in just as quickly, to start a piano-harmonica duet that becomes a very graceful and deeply-felt instrumental intro to 'Forever Young.' I haven't mentioned Howie Epstein much, but I believe spontaneous music as good as the ensemble segment of this two-minute intro doesn't happen without gifted and skillful and inspired playing from the bass player, who has the responsibility of connecting melody to rhythm and all of the players to each other. Wonderful music (followed by some really remarkable singing). Again, a whole new soundscape, enriched by and enriching the two that came before. In this fine setting, the blessings pronounced by the singer ('May God bless and keep you all-you'...an awkward but appealing mumble or mental error; 'May your wishes all come true') can be heard as addressed to the audience or to the 'she' of 'Tangled Up in Blue' or to the 'other' of 'I and I,' and do a lot to resolve and smooth off the life-story-situations depicted in those two previous songs.

A montage is 'the combining of pictorial elements from different sources in a single composition.' So here's an interesting tidbit of information about the montage Bob Dylan, performing artist and set-list writer, created on 9/30/87 in Munich: Two of the fourteen songs he performed, 'Tangled' and 'Shelter,' are from the same album, *Blood on the Tracks*; but the other twelve songs included in this

show are taken from twelve separate Bob Dylan albums released between 1963 and 1985. Fourteen songs, thirteen albums. What a palette this artist is working from! And how skillfully, with the help of his segues and his versatile band and his love of performing, he ties all these disparate elements together into a unified whole. A concert. And, accidentally or not, a concert tape.

Dylan and the Heartbreakers' 1987 segues are often clever surprises, like the juxtapositions of words and images in his 1964-66 songs. So after this epic performance of 'Forever Young' (possibly the best 'FY' of the season) comes to a suitably elegant end, we hear the Chuck Berry lick from 'You Can't Catch Me' (made famous by Keith Richards on the Rolling Stones' 1964 cover version) tentatively rising from a nondescript rhythm section shuffle sound, and thus we are tastefully drawn into a transition song, that all-purpose shuffle and not-quite-greatest-hit 'Maggie's Farm,' here serving as a chance for Dylan to take a break from all this intense creativity and just operate on cruise control for a few minutes. He enjoys it (and thus so do we), and the band shows off its ability to make particularly delicious Chuck Berry shuffle music (not like anything else they've been playing all night). It's an excellent (and seemingly very deliberate, carefully chosen) bridge between the lovely 'Tangled'-'Shelter'-'Forever' sequence and the extraordinary third segment of tonight's montage: 'Gotta Serve Somebody'/'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right'/'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine'/'Dead Man, Dead Man.'

So we're back to, 'You might be a confessor, in some rotten school...' Bob Dylan is speaking in tongues. Like Umm Kulthum for him, he's one of my favorite singers of all time, even when I can't understand a word he sings. The second line of the song is something like: 'Might be some churts money underneath your tool.' And then, 'Might go to church... You might not go. Might be on top/talking fast [both phrases seemingly sung at the same moment], you might be



talking slow, but you're gonna serve somebody...' He and the Queens sing the standard chorus line - 'It might be the Devil, it might be the Lord' - but not with any sense that this is an important part of the song's message. Bob Dylan is improvising freely, like Lester Young playing horn with a hip combo.

The second verse comes out: 'Might be rich, might be poor. Might be hungry, might have in store. Might be walking on the sidewalk, riding in a car, standing at your station, standing at your bar.' The singer's voice is expressive, and very responsive to the music behind and around him. The third verse could be a keeper if this were a songwriting session: 'Might be hot, might be cold. Might be shot, might be untold. Might be low, might be high. Might be saying hello, might be saying goodbye.' And then, after an especially wonderful lead guitar solo, my favorite improvised verse, the fourth and last: 'Might be regarded, livin' in France. Might be jumpin' crazy, might have a dance. Might be from century,

might be unborn. Might be nahtoll, or a Christmas morn. But you'll serve somebody...' The next two seconds manage to be both a swallowed vocal and an example of inspired scat singing, both at once. I don't think any of us, including me, can really claim to know who Bob Dylan thinks he is tonight, but there can be little question that he's performing freely and putting his heart into it. It's almost as if (during this 'Gotta Serve Somebody') we're getting a chance to watch the same mind that ad-libbed 'Gates of Eden' and 'Desolation Row' 22 years earlier stretching its muscles, free-associating, unwinding, like in a monitored dream-session in some futuristic laboratory.

The segue from 'Maggie's Farm' was very nice, and the segue from 'Gotta Serve Somebody' into 'Don't Think Twice' is spectacularly good. In both cases, it's like we're listening to Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf,' and hearing each character's theme before he or she walks onstage. Grand entrances. Shock of recognition. General happiness.

Shock of recognition partly because, as is so often the case at Dylan concerts, we can't be certain from the opening notes (or even, sometimes, the opening words) what song this is, what beloved old favorite or unexpected rarity we're about to hear. What is communicated in those first bluesy notes of 'Gotta Serve Somebody' arising from the nicely-executed conclusion of 'Maggie' is that something portentous is coming, something worthy of this attractive and (playfully) dramatic build-up. And then the shock is not that it's 'Serve Somebody' or

even that the lyrics are so unfamiliar and outrageous. The shock is that some part of ourself is being spoken to, and for, so unexpectedly and so unmistakably. As if we'd been waiting all our lives for this particular character (Peter, or the Hunter, or the Wolf) to walk onstage. We recognize him. It's me! A dear part of me I'd forgotten about or lost contact with.

So the delight we feel as we hear those very pretty piano notes that arise soon after the last chord of 'Serve Somebody' at Munich is not that this melody is my old favorite, 'Don't Think Twice.' Rather it's something like the delight we presumably all felt the first time (or one of the first times) we heard 'Don't Think Twice' on the radio or on a record, and felt something evoked by those very pretty guitar notes and then the sound of the singer's voice entering. We didn't know the song or its 'message' yet, but we felt the stirrings of a shock of recognition ('it's *me*; this is for me, whatever it is') that kept growing as we heard more of the performance and once we got a chance to hear it again. It's very pretty music Benmont Tench and Mike Campbell and Bob Dylan are making at the start of this song, and it awakens something in the listener quite apart from recognition that they're playing one of my favorite Dylan songs. What we recognize, with shock and pleasure, is that part of ourselves that is being awakened by this work of art; and right away, if our minds are demanding an explanation of all these powerful feelings that are rushing in, the singer tells us: 'Well, it ain't no use to sit and wonder why, babe, iffen you don't know by now...'

My God, his voice sounds good! Possibly the best singing he's done all autumn.

It's February 2001 as I'm writing this. (In my class, students are asked to put their names on their papers, so we know whose views are being expressed, since no two observers see or hear the same thing in the same event or performance... and the date of the writing, so we can locate the moment in this person's trajectory when he or she saw and heard things this way.) So I have the advantage, in my Dylan contemplations, of Clinton Heylin's just-published revised & expanded biography *Bob Dylan: Behind the Shades, Take Two*. In his preface, Heylin quotes Dylan associate Cesar Diaz (tour guitar technician from 1988 to 1993):

I think the greatest masterpiece he has ever pulled off is the fact that he can make people believe that part of him is involved in the writing of those songs. To me, each song is a play, a script, and he'll be that guy from the song for that moment, but then he'll change back to Bob. People make the mistake to think that he's the guy [who's speaking in a song's lyrics, when he performs it]. But the guy that wrote that song only existed for that moment. It took me a while to realize that. But he actually convinces you that yes, it is me who is talking to you and I'm being sincere about it...he is able to convince you that it is him at that point when he is singing the song, when in reality he's just singing a song and just playing.

What Diaz is describing is the sort of artistry that we properly expect of that

other kind of performer, a stage actor. What he calls attention to here, based on his experience of years of watching Dylan and his audiences from the side of the stage, is that most of the people who attend the shows have come to see this old trouper in a long-running drama called 'The Bob Dylan Story.' And, understandably, they forget that this is a play, fiction, theater - much of the excitement is that that's the real Bob Dylan up there, the one who slew all those dragons when he was a real-life hero back in the 1960s. So they don't see him as an actor, in the same sense that contemporaries of Edith Piaf and Umm Kulthum and Billie Holiday naturally felt and wanted to feel that the broken hearts and frustrating love relationships they were evoking in their performances were their own, and as immediate and urgent to them as they were to their listeners at the moment of hearing them.

In 1963 Dylan said of 'Don't Think Twice': 'It's a hard song to sing. I can sing it sometimes, but I ain't that good yet. I don't carry myself yet the way that Big Joe Williams, Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly and Lightnin' Hopkins have carried themselves. I hope to be able to someday, but they're older people. I sometimes am able to do it, but it happens, when it happens, unconsciously.' Twenty-four years later, Dylan is an older person and a more experienced singer. How good is he now, how does he carry himself? (And who does he think he is? Some of you haven't handed in your papers yet.) I think anyone who listens attentively to all ten 1987 'trio format' performances of 'Don't Think

Twice' will probably agree that the last sentence of Dylan's quote still applies. Sometimes (but not always) he's able to carry himself with an authority and humanity quite worthy of this little script he wrote when he was 21. This is particularly true on September 30th in Munich. When he sings, 'I once loved a woman, a child I'm told,' he's very believable indeed. As an actor should be. It may be he even convinces himself that it's him who's talking, because when he sings the next line it comes out 'I'd give her my heart' - in the present tense, instead of the colloquial past of 'I give her my heart' in the original version.

If you give yourself the pleasure of listening again to the original recorded performance of this song, on Dylan's second album, while looking at the lyrics as published in his book *Lyrics*, you'll probably notice that the printed version is not the same as the 'original' recorded version. You might also notice that the colloquial language of the recorded version ('We never done too much talkin' anyway'; 'Iffen you don't know by now'; 'It'll never do somehow') has the effect of making the song more evidently a fiction, a play, an invented character speaking to another invented entity in an imaginary (though very reality-based) situation. (So the songwriter is certainly expressing feelings he's felt in his relationship with his girlfriend Suze, but he's replaced her and their New York City setting with a woman who lives in the country and has a rooster, and himself with a ramblin' man who says things like, 'we never done too much talkin'...')

So (ahem) the shock of recognition I feel when I hear the unique melody played and evoked by the opening piano notes of this Munich '87 'Don't Think Twice' and from every moment of Dylan's singing here, and when I listen to the remarkable interplay of organ and melodic guitar and rhythm guitar in the between-verse breaks, is the shock of being deeply touched by a musical creation that seems to understand me and illuminate my inner life in ways I didn't think were possible. And since I can't help being convinced that Bob Dylan is the guy talking in this performance, I also have the illusion of feeling very close to this troubadour on his way from the Billy Parker movie and the Dylan/Dead tour to the Traveling Wilburys and the 'official' start of the Never-Ending Tour next spring and to his rendezvous with a voice in his head in Locarno five days from now, when he sings, 'I'm walking down that long, lonesome road, babe; Where I'm bound, I can't tell...' Gooseflesh. Great music. Great performed art.

The eleventh song at Munich in 1987 is a good example of how the same moment-of-performance can be a delight to one intelligent listener (or 'student') and a real disappointment to another. 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine' is a powerful, evocative song, and one Dylan rarely attempts in concert. So how exciting to hear its melody notes and opening words arising right after the end of 'Don't Think Twice'! And how distressing that Dylan sings it so poorly and with such lack of conviction after his sublime vocal on the previous number. At moments when I'm under the

spell of my excitement at hearing this song and of my keen interest in what new messages its powerful lyrics and images might unfold for the singer and for me at this moment in the performer and dreamer's spiritual life, I can find it charming and intriguing and rewarding. At other moments I'm distressed and surprised that this vocal can be or seem so flat and lifeless in contrast to the technically pleasing and wonderfully alive vocal that precedes it.

I said earlier that I believe the fact that different listeners (or, as in this case, even the same listener) may often have very different opinions regarding the quality of a particular Dylan performance is at the heart of his accomplishments as a performing artist. What I'm pointing towards is that, in my opinion, Dylan's power as a creator of performed art is the result of his ability to be true to his instincts and thus his inner self at the moment of performance, for better or worse. This allows what he creates (and this is also true of his songwriting, which can be thought of as a kind of performance) to break free of the limits his conscious mind (like all of our conscious minds) would impose if it had the opportunity.

In turn we listeners sometimes listen intuitively, and sometimes quite consciously and deliberately. For better or worse, in both cases. The power of the *mutrib* is to influence his listeners to hear a song with their hearts and instincts, not with their reasoning minds. Umm Kulthum or Billie Holiday or Bob Dylan at their best cast a spell on us. This can happen via a recording. And just as what

the singer/musician expresses depends on who he (or she) is and what he's feeling at that moment, so what we hear, and the extent to which we are able to let go of our conscious judging minds in the process, depends on who we are and where we are in our own trajectories of feelings at the moment of listening. So contradictory assessments of the quality (and even the 'meaning') of a particular performance are inherent in the nature of the art form, of the experience of listening and connecting or not connecting. As Bob Dylan once said, 'At times I think there are no words but these to tell what's true, and there are no truths outside the Gates of Eden.' At times, I also think so. 'Sometime, not all the time,' as Dylan also said (in 'Clothes Line Saga,' 1967).

There is one 1987 performance (out of the five he did) of 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine' that does delight me consistently - from October 11th in Birmingham, England. Inevitably, I have a theory as to what happened, for better and worse, in the case of these two performances of the song. Not surprisingly, this theory has to do with the voice Dylan says he heard in his head in Locarno, five days after Munich and six days before the 10/11 Birmingham show.

To me, the Locarno incident Dylan described to *Newsweek* in 1997 was a spiritual event, in the sense that confronting one's doubts and fears always is. And certainly a dream in which one sees a long-dead saint preaching as though he were alive now, and then feels one's own guilt or shame related to one's reactions to this vision, is also a spiritual event. A visi-

tation. Ambiguous, like any dream, and like most spiritual events.

Interestingly, Augustine also heard voices. ‘So was I speaking [to the Lord] and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo! I heard from a neighboring house a voice, as of boy or girl, I know not, chanting, and oft repeating, “Take up and read; Take up and read.” Instantly my countenance altered, I began to think most intently whether children were wont in any kind of play to sing such words: nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So checking the torrent of my tears, I arose; interpreting it to be no other than a command from God to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find.’ (from *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Book VIII, ‘The Struggle of Conversion’)

Dylan may not have known this about Augustine when he wrote the song, as he also did not know that Augustine was not ‘put out to death’ (he died of a fever at the age of 76, in Africa in the year 430). It certainly seems likely that as with ‘I Pity the Poor Immigrant,’ the title and first line of ‘I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine’ came into the author’s mind unbidden, and the rest of the lyrics followed quickly. Guided by intuition, and incorporating images and bits of information (or misinformation) from the storehouse of his magpie mind. To me, the Augustine in Dylan’s song is in the image of an Old Testament (Jewish, not Catholic) prophet, or possibly of John the Baptist.

My theory, for what it’s worth, is that when he sang ‘St. Augustine’ in Munich (and in East Berlin September 17 and in

Milan October 4), Dylan unexpectedly, and probably unconsciously, found himself resentful that he hadn’t in fact had such a dream or other message from the Higher Power, now when he particularly needed one. The result is that he sings in a voice choked (restrained) by ambivalence, and his efforts to conjure up his own fiery breath are quite unsuccessful. There are however some pleasant eccentricities in the performance which the part of me that wants to be delighted by it can seize on when that’s my inclination: the wistful sound he makes with his breath after ‘coat of solid gold’ and the striking way he phrases the guilty word ‘amongst.’ One can also find pleasure in the mental error that has him start the last verse, ‘I dreamed I was Augustine, alive with fiery breath...’ And of course I tend to regard the excellence of the 10/11 performance of ‘St. Augustine’ as probably partly due to a change in the singer’s personal spiritual weather report since Locarno. He had the dream or visitation he was longing for, heard the voice, and so it’s no surprise he can now sing the song joyfully and with such conviction and power.

The last segue of the regular part of the Munich concert (you can’t play nonstop into the encores, form requires that you act like the concert is over until the audience calls you back with their applause) is particularly gratifying. The transition itself - Campbell playing the ‘St. Augustine’ melody very colorfully and lovingly over a rhythm section that is clearly arriving at the end of something and then a very brief jam extending that ending into the stirring introductory notes of the next song, which

turns out to be 'Dead Man, Dead Man' - makes a statement, one that feels very fulfilling, as though everything that's been played and sung all evening has necessarily brought us here, to this musical moment.

It's quite a moment... band cooking happily and bandleader/rhythm guitarist /singer dancing a fandango alongside them, celebrating the successful climax of tonight's creation, this complex and very expressive montage of Bob Dylan thoughts and music and visions. The last verse of 'Dead Man, Dead Man' is entirely improvised:

'Wake up! in pajama tops,'

he sings in an enchanting whisper. I can't catch any of the words of the next line, though I feel something from them anyway. And then:

*'The ghetto that you mumble mumble,
I'll bail you out of jail...'*

*Every time you tell me that you're
trying to survive,*

Ooh I can't stand it, I can't stand it,

Pretending that you're alive!'

This last line might be addressed to himself, as the whole song was when he wrote it. Bert Cartwright in his pamphlet *The Bible in the Lyrics of Bob Dylan* reports that, 'In some of his concerts Dylan explained that he composed this song one time upon looking at himself in the mirror.' Cartwright also informs us that 'Dead Man, Dead Man' is inspired by Ephesians 5:14: 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' But whether Dylan is addressing himself or not, it's illustrative of the richness of the performing artist's

montaging that 'pretending that you're alive' and 'dead man, dead man, when will you arise?' tonight follow a song in which he sings, 'I dreamed I saw St. Augustine, alive as you and me' and "Arise! Arise!" he cried so loud...' St. Augustine is certainly a dead man, as is Joey Gallo, and if the dead man of this song ('cobwebs in your mind, dust upon your eyes') is Bob Dylan looking at himself in the mirror, then every song in this montage might be about a dead man. 'Every time you tell me that you're trying to survive, ooh I can't stand it...' Delicious humor, if I'm not entirely off the mark about what this simultaneously accidental and very conscious artist is up to here.

One last note about the splendid segues between songs in Dylan and the Heartbreakers' 1987 Munich concert /montage: A friend of mine who worked for the Grateful Dead around this time tells me that in writing their set lists and thus determining the sequence in which songs would be performed, the Dead gave consideration to the keys in which songs were played, because the little transitional jams they liked to play between songs would be easier and freer and sounded better when the two songs were in the same or a similar key. Dylan clearly noticed this during the summer 1987 tour, and evidently was stimulated to start thinking of his own concerts as expressive compositions in which his songs would be the movements. A new symphony each night! Let's try this sequence and see what happens...

This led him to some bold experiments, like starting the Brussels October 8

concert with 'Desolation Row.' Dylan's sense of how a concert may be shaped by the selection of an opening song and closing song, how these choices could be an opportunity to make an indirect but aesthetically effective statement, even extended to the tour as a whole. This was revealed when he sang 'Go Down, Moses,' the last song at the first Temples in Flames show in Tel Aviv, for the second time ever at the end of the last concert of the tour, in London on October 17. Some kind of mysterious full circle. 'Tell old Pharaoh, let my people go.' Dylan had literally been in Egypt-land the day before that first show. And now it was time to say goodbye to the Queens of Rhythm and the Heartbreakers and the Temples in Flames audiences and go back to that other world so far away from the bizarre familiarity of

being on tour, knowing that your purpose in life is to do the next show in the next town. There was plenty to look back on at the end of the tour, not only Dylan's first shows in Israel but his first-ever performance in Eastern Europe (Sept. 17 in East Berlin, in front of 100,000 people). And the penultimate song of the tour, 'Rainy Day Women' in London just before 'Go Down, Moses' and right after 'Chimes of Freedom', turned out to be a glimpse of the future, when ex-Beatle George Harrison came onstage to sing and play with Bob Dylan and Tom Petty, soon to be his bandmates in a new recording unit called The Traveling Wilburys. 'They'll stone you when you're 29!' George ad-libbed, though in fact he was then 44, two years younger than the future Lucky Wilbury.

1. Some months after I wrote this chapter, I received a letter commenting on it from one of this book's Patrons, Jeff Taylor, of Rochester (MN) Community College, who wrote, 'When I first read the line in the 1997 Newsweek story, I immediately thought of the Book of Daniel. During the Babylonian exile, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon issued a decree requiring every person to 'fall down and worship the golden image' and those who refused would be 'cast into a burning fiery furnace' (Daniel 3:10-11). Daniel goes on to tell of the faith and defiance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (often described as Hebrew children, they were actually Hebrew or Jewish men - government officials, in fact). The king asks the three men, 'Now if you are ready...to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?' (3:15) They respond: 'If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up' (3:17-18). This infuriated the king, he threw them into the furnace, and they were preserved by angelic protection and a kingly change-of-mind. The Jewish men in Daniel's account refused to 'fall down' and worship. The opposite of falling down is to remain standing. Dylan, a Jewish convert to Christianity ('messianic Jew'), was 'determined to stand.' The Jewish men were determined to remain standing in the presence of the Babylonian idol even though they would be cast into the fire. They knew that God could save them from the fire, but even if he chose not to rescue them, they were determined to do the right thing. Their statement that the 'God whom we serve is able to deliver us...and he will...But if not...' is very similar to Dylan's 'whether God will deliver me or not.' As you know, Dylan has been steeped in the apocalyptic portions of the Bible since his conversion in 1978. Daniel ranks right beside Revelation as a primary source of End-Times information. A Dylan thought (or Divine message) echoing the Book of Daniel, with its emphasis on defying the evils of Babylon while living in its midst, makes perfect sense.' It does indeed. Thank you, Professor Taylor!

A SERIES OF DREAMS: LISTENING TO DYLAN WITH THE RIGHT-BRAIN

by Alan Davis

I can remember exactly when and where it was that I decided, once and for all, to get to the bottom - *really* to the bottom - of 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. It was 1967. I was going to participate in an archaeological dig at St Albans for three weeks in my university Easter vacation, and I knew that although there would be a lot to hold my interest, there would also be long periods of uneventful, mind-deadening shovelling of earth from one place to another. So I needed something to keep my mind active - something to focus on - and I had a master plan. I was not at all persuaded about the claims that some of my friends were making about the genius of Bob Dylan, but I'd tried hard. Despite the obvious fact that he couldn't sing or play guitar very well, I'd managed to listen to all the albums up to *Blonde on Blonde*, and found a lot of it incomprehensible. Incomprehensible, but irritatingly interesting. Sometimes (but not often), even moving.

Anyway, this was my master plan. I'd write out the complete words of 'Mr. Tambourine Man', and would spend the first day or two carrying the sheet of paper around with me, learning the words off by heart. Then, with the whole thing committed to memory, I could begin the task in earnest. With perfect recall of every word, I could sift Dylan's lyrics with my mind while sifting the earth with my shovel, and finally, once and for all, figure out *exactly* what it was all about. Surely, in three weeks of hard thinking, I could get to the bottom of it? After all, I was successfully working my way through a degree course in physics, and what could be harder than that?

There was something in the naïveté of all this that now reminds me of Walter de la Mare's poem about examining a snowdrop:

*Now - now, as low I stooped, thought I,
I will see what this snowdrop is;
So shall I put much argument by,
And solve a lifetime's mysteries.*

But I set about the task with optimism. As the days of digging drifted by, I employed my best set of analytical spanners, and took 'Mr. Tambourine Man' to bits. What was the 'evenin's empire', and why would it return to sand? Why would I be branded on my feet? Who was the 'ragged clown'? And so on.

At the end of my three weeks (I suppose I must have thought about other things as well!), the component parts of 'Mr. Tambourine Man' lay at my feet, and (of course) I was no better off than I had been at the start. Maybe even worse off, for after all this intense concentration some of the imagery seemed a lot less effective than it had been before. It was all rather discouraging. In a state of perplexity, I abandoned the project, and more or less abandoned Bob Dylan too (until about thirty years later, but that's another story).

I didn't know, then, about the left/right brain theory of consciousness, but if I had I think it would have helped me quite a lot. The idea, crudely speaking (I'm by no means an expert on the subject), is that the brain operates in two halves. The left half of the brain is responsible for analytical processes such as those involved in speech, or calculation; the right half concerns itself with intuitive thought; pattern recognition, for instance.¹ I think at the time I believed that rational analysis was the only 'real' way of understanding something, and that the intuitive response we have to art, poetry or music, was a matter more concerned with pleasure than insight. Perhaps it was my scientific training that blinded me;

perhaps it was just immaturity and inexperience. But looking back, now, at that 'Mr. Tambourine Man' experiment of mine, I wonder whether there isn't something to be learned from it: something about the way we read poetry, and the way we listen to songs; and in particular about the way we listen to Bob Dylan.

How do *you* listen to Dylan? People talk about the importance of the words in his songs, and yes of course they are of enormous importance - so how do you listen, as he sings? Do you listen with the left-brain, consciously registering each word and its possible meaning, consciously relating it to those that went before, and to those that come after, and to the music? Or do you listen with the right-brain, allowing the words to wash over and through you, responding intuitively to the experience in a way that would be difficult, if not impossible, to define? Taking songs and poems as a whole, most of us probably do a bit of both, depending on the particular poem or poet, and the particular song, or singer. But there are some poems, poets, songs, and singers that almost seem to require left-brain activity to be switched off completely; where rational thought can actually impede understanding. William Blake comes to mind. So does Bob Dylan.

I've been haunted by Blake as an artist for a quarter of a century, but it took a long time for me to come to terms with the poetry of the Prophetic Books, because I found I could barely get to the end of a line without feeling defeated by sheer confusion. Here's an example, from *The Book of Thel*:

*The eternal gates' terrific porter lifted the
northern bar*

Now, if you are going to try to make sense of a poem in which almost every line is as (initially) impenetrable as that, then you will rapidly grind to a halt if your left-brain is fully active. Blake offers no preparation in the preceding lines, no explanation in the lines that follow. What porter? Why terrific? What bar? Why northern? Blake himself would have discouraged the analytical approach as an inadequate response. 'Single vision', he called it; or 'Newton's sleep'. Even so, it was almost an accident, born of frustration, which led me many years ago to an untutored self-discovered approach of absurd simplicity; which was, just to *read* it. Just to let the words go by, and let the images form, and not to insist on any level of logical sense, but to be content with a purely intuitive feeling of significance. Approaching it like this, I found that half an hour of reading Blake left me feeling as though I'd been walking with the gods - deeply satisfied, yet hardly able to describe the experience, or to explain why it seemed significant.

This is almost exactly the approach that I find works best when I listen to Bob Dylan. Most of the time I seem to be barely conscious of what the words actually are; I'm more sensible of the nuances in the way they're sung, as though the voice is an instrument, and the words only a guide to possible meanings, forming a channel for the voice to follow. Out of this flow of words and voice and intonation and music, images form continually; but if I were to stop and think logically about it, I'd have difficulty in describing in a coherent way

what was going on. For instance:

*All your seasick sailors, they are rowing
home.*

*All your reindeer armies, are all going
home.*

We could analyse that as much as you like, but the analysis will never get close to the right-brain-intuited 'meaning' - the meaning that I seem to experience *directly* when listening to a good performance of the song. In the context of the song the images presented build up into a pattern redolent of loss; of defeated aims; of hopeless causes abandoned; of sickening disappointment. But we aren't merely *shown* the loss, nor do we have it explained to us. As the images pass through our (right-brain) minds, and as the pattern is recognised, we seem to *taste* it.

Of course you could say that *all* poetry demands right-brain intuitive reception of this kind, and you'd be right; but all poetry doesn't require the same total suspension of *left* brain activity that often seems to be necessary when listening to Dylan. Blake himself, for instance, is often perfectly intelligible in a rational sense:

*I went to the garden of love,
And I saw what I never had seen:
A chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.*

I can shine left-brain light on this, and follow it on a rational level, and continue through the rest of the poem, and still respond to Blake's outrage with my right-brain. Similarly I can think my way through many of Dylan's earliest songs without harm. But the moment I start consciously wondering what he 'really' means by those reindeer armies, or the seasick sailors, a

kind of anxiety of the absurd sets in, and I lose the direct taste of the feeling of loss. When the left-brain kicks in, it really is all over now, Baby Blue.

I think there may be a very good reason why the right-brain approach to Dylan is so successful, and I touched on it in an article I wrote for *Isis* recently.² I was writing specifically about ‘Mississippi’, but the idea is more generally applicable to a great deal of Dylan’s work:

There’s no narrative to ‘Mississippi’; rather it’s like a collage, pieces of life patched together in portions of just the right sort of size to take in whole. The collage effect parallels the way in which our thoughts and memories tend to operate, drifting in free association from bad to good memories, and back again.

A great deal of our ‘normal’ consciousness must consist of right-brain activity: that is, of sub-rational mental processes which link one thought to another on a purely intuitive level. Not, of course, when we’re engaged in activities like writing out a grocery list or calculating our income tax, which are obviously matters for the left-brain; no, I mean occasions like those when we’re driving home after work, or mowing the lawn. Often we should say (if asked) that we were thinking of nothing in particular, and yet our minds are far from inactive at such times. They are full of continually changing images and thoughts that drift in and out of focus, linked together by connections that would probably make little rational sense even if we could unravel them. I might, for example, be walking along a street in November. The fallen leaves at my feet bring on that ‘end-of-year’

feeling and nudge me into melancholy, and a sense of loneliness. Images of old friends drift into my mind, and memories of old wounds, never fully healed. Just like this, from ‘Mississippi’:³

Walking through the leaves, falling from the trees

Feeling like a stranger nobody sees

So many things that we never will undo

I know you’re sorry, I’m sorry too

Or how about this, from ‘Highlands’, which could be interpreted as a reference to this very process (or something very like it) and an expression of Dylan’s own puzzlement about it:

I’m listening to Neil Young, I gotta turn up the sound

Someone’s always yelling turn it down

Feel like I’m drifting

Drifting from scene to scene

I’m wondering what in the devil could it all possibly mean?

And surely ‘Series of Dreams’ is inspired by Dylan’s personal exploration of his own right-brain activity:

Wasn’t making any great connection

Wasn’t falling for any intricate scheme

Nothing that would pass inspection

Just thinking of a series of dreams

This ability of Dylan’s to create an art that seems to parallel our moment-to-moment experience of life - the flavour of life as we live it in the instant - is uncanny. For me, it’s the root of the great power of his best work. I have no idea whether today (as at the time of *Blood on the Tracks*) Dylan manages to do consciously what he ‘used to do unconsciously’, and I don’t think it matters. The important thing is that much of his writing draws its *inspiration* from

right-brain consciousness; and given the origin of that inspiration, it seems inevitable that right-brain *listening* is necessary to engage with it most successfully.

So far this looks like thoroughly bad news for the left-brain - but wait; not so fast. Most of us have read pieces of criticism which, followed and understood as perfectly rational (left-brain) analysis, have enriched our Dylan listening experience; I presume that most of us read this magazine in the hope of gaining that kind of enrichment. But if all we truly need to do is tune in our right-brains and drop out, why should we gain anything from our left-brain reading? The answer lies in the commissure - a physical link or bridge between the left- and right-brains. We know this bridge is important because patients who have had it surgically severed display two distinct personalities. So we can be assured that there is traffic between the two halves in 'normal' people (yes, even including Dylan fans), and the trick is to get the flow and the balance right across the bridge. If we do, then when we read Christopher Ricks on Dylan with the *left* brain, our discoveries *will* have an impact (though we may not necessarily know what it will be) when we next listen to Dylan with the *right* brain.

The point is, though, that it's the *right*-brain experience that counts. It has, and must have, the last word. It's only through the right-brain experience of the art that we can truly 'understand' the meaning of what Christopher Ricks has said, however tight and logical his argument might have seemed to the left-brain. That was *only* an argument (the product of Blake's single

vision), and the danger lies (this was the mistake of my 'Mr. Tambourine Man' project) in thinking that the meaning of the art is to be found there. It isn't. The art-as-experienced is the real thing, and the experience *is* the meaning.

So right-brain thinking alone doesn't hold the key to the universe. But it is the source of all our creativity, and (to use Blake's terminology) it can lift us out of the slough of single (left-brain) vision into the more enlightened realms of two-fold vision, bringing us closer to realising our full potential as human beings.⁴ It may not be claiming too much to suggest that when we learn how to engage with the art of Bob Dylan, we begin to learn what it could be like to be more fully human.

1. For an entertaining non-specialist discussion of left- and right-brain consciousness, see Colin Wilson, 'The Laurel and Hardy Theory of Consciousness', in *The Essential Colin Wilson* (London: Harrap, 1985), pp. 154-63.

2. Alan Davis, 'Staying in Mississippi', *Isis* 100 (Dec 01-Jan 02), pp.58-59.

3. I always find that quoting Dylan's words on the page is a very unsatisfactory substitute for hearing them sung. They look so much less than they sound. The extracts are quoted here, like this from 'Mississippi', as a means of identifying the passages; the real (right-brain!) reference is to the words *as sung*.

4. It's worth observing that Blake's 'two-fold' vision didn't involve *abandoning* left-brain thinking; it *included* and *transcended* it, on the way up the ladder to the dizzy heights of three- and, finally, four-fold vision: the realm of imagination, mystical insight, and ecstasy.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my wife Daphne, and Dave Ashbridge, Ben Clayton, Sara Lussier and Andy Muir for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

by John Perry

"Tune, Tune, Tune"

Dylan once described Robertson as a 'mathematical guitar genius', a charming though virtually meaningless phrase - and one that those who have wrestled with capos and esoteric tunings might equally apply to the 1966-model Dylan. Anyone attracted to patterns should check out the system of keys and capos Dylan evolved for the acoustic section of his 65/66 world tour; a system which if not exactly 'mathematical' demonstrates a pleasing symmetry. (Anyone *unattracted* should quit this deadly article now).

The pattern, far from random, is created by the selection of keys and the resulting capo movements (all downward). Unlike some of his later shambles, Dylan didn't simply pick up an acoustic guitar and strum it in the appropriate recorded key for each song - e.g. '*Johanna, now lemme see... uh... key of G ... yup G.*' - but devised a logical sequence allowing movement from one song to the next with minimum fuss or delay. To oversimplify slightly, this consisted of starting the set ('She Belongs to Me') capo'd at the 5th fret and then, with each song, moving the capo down one fret. Brilliant! Why have I never seen anyone else do it? It's elegant, simple and possesses the sovereign virtue of being almost impossible to fuck up, regardless of how many drugs you've taken.

This is always important though never more so than in '66, since Dylan was hardly using regular (EADGBE) tuning at all, preferring alternate tunings adapted to suit individual songs. Of the 7 songs most regularly performed in the 65/66 acoustic show, not one was played in regular tuning *and* without a capo - thus there was plenty to attend to between numbers.

Such tunings and capo transpositions can cause the performer a great deal more trouble than the casual listener might suppose, at worst bringing the entire show to a halt. Witness Keith Richards' early attempt to take his open tunings onstage, at Hyde Park 1969, where the resultant confusion caused a reticent, teenage Mick Taylor to cross the stage gingerly and offer to help The Great Man work out which fret to capo. Strangely, this sequence has been excised from the film. Dylan's solution to a similar basic problem avoided the need for any emergency Robertson aid.

Much of the distinctive sound of Dylan's '66 acoustic guitar comes from his altered tunings. The two alt. tunings most commonly used in blues, folk and rock are Open E (or D) and Open G. Open E is the 'Elmore James' style much used by 60's British Blues bands (done to death many would say, by Peter Green's Jeremy Spencer-era Fleetwood Mac) but also put to more original use on songs like the Stones 'Gimme Shelter'. Open G (especially the 5 string variant) became a staple of the Stones post-'Honky Tonk Women' sound. It seems to have entered mainstream British use via Ry Cooder who played on the *Let It Bleed* album filling Brian Jones's chair and whose guitar parts mysteriously vanished, only to re-appear, played almost note for note by Keith Richards (a technique known in the trade as a 'Sponge Job'). Though there are examples to the contrary, Open E has come to be associated broadly with electric Chicago Blues, while Open G is more of an acoustic, country blues tuning. Muddy Waters' earliest recordings use open G - in fact it was said at one time you could tell which Delta plantation a player came from by his tuning, and a few key phrases indigenous to that tuning.

Although Open E features on a number of *Blood on the Tracks* songs (famously confusing Mike Bloomfield when Dylan ran down some of the songs to him) in 1966 Dylan wasn't using open tunings but Drop tunings - 'regular' tuning with just the bottom (6th) string of the guitar down tuned down from E. This produces a deeper bass sound, very suitable for solo performance

and can also be used to create a modal, 'drone' sound. On some songs the bottom string is lowered one tone to D while on others, believe it or not, it's taken down *two* whole tones to C - quite a drop. Much lower and you're approaching the point where the string gets so loose it begins to flap.

With a tuning as low as Drop C *and* a capo as high as the 4th fret you're making quite a radical change to the guitar's tonality - yet the casual listener, say to the Free Trade Hall CD, probably wouldn't hear anything out of the ordinary: I didn't myself, until I started *playing* the songs and trying to see where the tonality came from. The tunings are *so* simple that anybody who can master a basic C chord can try them and it's then when you play the songs that you hear how much of the sound lies in the small detail.

The best way to get a handle on all this is to try it yourself. The good news about drop tunings is they're dead easy. The easiest example for the basic guitar-player is 'It's All Over Now Baby Blue', with its verse built on the two simplest chords in the book, namely the C to G7 change which fuelled the whole of skiffle (and many of Ray Davies' songs too).

Forget about the capo (unless you *want* to use it) and make a regular, 3 finger, C chord. Next, detune the 6th string right down from E to C - so it's an octave below the 5th string. (If you want a visual aid, watch the sequence in *Dont Look Back* where Dylan trumps Donovan with 'Baby Blue'). Whack the C chord. There you are.

The G7 chord has to be played slightly differently since you need to lay off the 6th string (which you'd normally stop at the

3rd fret). The solution couldn't be simpler: forget about it! Make the regular G7 shape - another 3 finger chord - and just take your 3rd finger off the 6th string, so you're playing it as a two finger chord. Less notes! Always good. In drop tunings this principle applies to every chord shape that would usually involve fretting the 6th string. Make the chord normally, but leave off the bottom string.

For the technically minded, the tonality changes partly because those G and F chords no longer have G or F at their root: they've in fact become 'G over B' and 'F over A' (or, depending how you play it, F over C). Also, no matter how cleanly you pick, that low 6th string is going to ring out, providing a drone C on the bottom of both (G and F) chords.

It'd be misleading, especially with Dylan who's the most practical and untheoretical of guitarists, to take too literally the technical terms, Modal, 'Celtic' or 'Eastern', nonetheless, them's the terms. It would be equally misleading to suggest that Dylan was doing something revolutionary here: acoustic folkies have always used these tunings, nonetheless Dylan's application is neat and exceptionally well suited to the songs - in fact, it's probably integral. To judge from *Bringing It All Back Home* 'Tambourine Man', 'It's All Over Now Baby Blue' and 'Love Minus Zero' were most probably *written* in drop C tuning.

The same holds true for *Blonde on Blonde*. 'Just Like a Woman' appears there in played in the C shape (a capo at the 4th fret puts it into the key of E) but with one important change from the acoustic,

touring version; the 6th string is hardly used. Either Dylan avoided picking it (much as he did at Manchester) or perhaps took the string off altogether. (We can tell he didn't use it from the way the lowest note of each chord is played on the 5th string). There's good reason for this; the low drone that works so well to expand solo playing is less appropriate in the context of a larger band, where it sounds murky, clutters up the bottom end and encroaches on the bass player's territory. For the same reason, an experienced keyboard player will avoid using his left hand (the low notes on a keyboard occupy the same register as the bass). You can hear on 'Just Like a Woman' that Kooper is playing with the right hand only.

To cope with a variety of tunings in a single set, I've seen guitarists take up to a dozen instruments onstage with them, each in their own variant tuning. The *reductio ad absurdissimum* of this method was a late-70's Terry Reid show in Victoria where more than a dozen highly desirable instruments caused the stage to resemble a vintage guitar fair more than a concert. They also caused untold confusion as Reid fought an unequal struggle to remember which instrument was set up in which tuning [see paragraph 2, above.] A better result is commonly accomplished with 2 or 3 guitars and a busy guitar tech retuning the spares. The former is a bore, as somebody has to carry all those instruments (and somebody else is equally likely to nick them) and the latter is undesirable since it leaves the performer at the mercy of an unfaithful servant.

In '66 Dylan did neither of these things. With a flexibility developed in the folk clubs he played a single acoustic guitar and, as noted, devised a sequence whereby each song's tuning and capo position flowed comfortably from its predecessor. There would of course also have been aesthetic and dynamic reasons for the precise running order. A set needs to be paced so that it 'breathes' and so it can build to a climax. When compiling a set, one avoids putting songs in the same key next to one another. Even radically differing songs - with different feels, different rhythms and wildly different *tempi* - will start to sound 'samey' in sequence if they're all in the same key. From the chart below you'll see the only successive songs played in the same actual key¹ are 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue' and 'Desolation Row'. Both are in D, but because the capo is moved between the two songs they have a different tonality or 'flavour' due to one being played with the D chord *shape* and one being played with a C shape. This may sound horribly complicated in words but it's actually terribly simple in music. Chords are made up of the 1st 3rd and 5th note of the scale, but the physical arrangements of a guitar fretboard cause different chord shapes to stack these components in

different orders or harmonic 'voicings'. Thus the basic C shape comprises (bottom to top) 1 3 5 1 3 - a very whitebread, ABC voicing, whilst the root D shape comprises a more interesting -1 5 1 3.

When you listen to the Free Trade Hall show you hear how little time was wasted between songs. Even the tired and emotional Melbourne show (performed on a borrowed 'folk-music' guitar with its own feelings about being subjected to such unexpected tunings) doesn't mess about. At both shows you can hear Dylan retuning the bottom string, sometimes covering it with patter, sometimes just tuning to a mouth harp. (In those days before stage tuners, he seems to have had a good ear; the tuning is precise).

With occasional variations, the acoustic set seems to have remained essentially the same from one hemisphere to another, even in such remote backwaters as Manchester, running - She Belongs to Me / Fourth Time Around / Visions of Johanna / It's All Over Now Baby Blue / Desolation Row / Just Like a Woman / Mr. Tambourine Man.

1. In this context 'actual' means that if you play the CD and strike D on a piano, you'll find both songs SOUND in that key. So the 'actual' key in both cases is D, but the capo'ing causes the chords to be voiced differently.

	Capo @ fret #	Tuning	Played Key	'Actual' Key
She Belongs to Me	5	Reg.	G	C
Fourth Time Around	4	Drop C	C	E
Visions of Johanna	2	Reg.	G	A
It's All Over Now, Baby Blue	2	Drop C	C	D
Desolation Row	x	DropD	D	D
Just Like a Woman	5	Drop C	C	F
Mr. Tambourine Man	4	Drop C	C	E

The set starts out on regular tuning, with a capo at the 5th fret - just about the highest practical position.

She Belongs to Me

Regular Tuning Capo 5th fret
Then the capo comes down 1 fret to the 4th, and the bottom string is detuned to C for.

Fourth Time Around

Drop C Tuning Capo 4th fret
After this we hear Dylan tuning the 6th string back up into regular tuning, and the capo continues its downward path, reaching the 2nd fret for.

Visions of Johanna

Regular tuning Capo 2nd
After Johanna, the capo stays at the 2nd and the bass string is again dropped down to C.

It's All Over Now, Baby Blue

Drop C tuning Capo 2nd
Having gone through the 5th, 4th and 2nd frets the capo now comes off and for the first time, with Desolation Row, the guitar is played in its natural register. The song is in D, so Dylan takes the bass string to D

Desolation Row

Drop D tuning (no Capo)
The Melbourne concert gives us a clear taste of the 'drop D sound' as Dylan coughs his way through 47 seconds of a single, unvaried D chord. Sometimes he's plainly just ridding himself of a frog in his throat but at other times, when he uses these long intros, he's milking the situation's dramatic potential to the full.

I hadn't listened to Melbourne since it appeared on vinyl, decades ago, and comparing it now with other sets from the tour it's plain that the vocal attitudes adopted from show to show - vocal personae if you will - are far more consciously 'acted' than I realized formerly. One's first assumption with many singers, even Dylan, is to think in terms of 'natural' singing - 'that's how his/her voice sounds' - and even though things are rarely that simple, the notion holds for many singers. Not here though. Put another way, at Melbourne Dylan is hamming it up something rotten.

At the end of 'Desolation Row', the capo goes back up to its starting point at the 5th fret.

Just Like a Woman

Drop C Capo 5th
You can hear the F and G chords voiced over the drone C throughout: a single instance, on the line 'To-night as I stand in-side the rain' the F comes on the syllable 'night' and the G on 'stand'. Finally, the capo is moved from the 5th to the 4th fret, and the drop C tuning is retained for

Mr. Tambourine Man

Drop C tuning Capo 4
Exeunt.

© John Perry 2003

John Morrison: Barb Jungr Interview

Barb Jungr's latest album, an excellent CD of Dylan songs entitled *Every Grain Of Sand*, was released last year on Linn Records. I felt that her performance exhibited a maturity and intelligence - as well as a quality of voice - which is seldom enough to be found among those who turn to Bob Dylan for their source material. As well as being a performer, Barb also teaches and writes about singing. She has contributed the section 'Vocal expression in the blues and gospel music' in the *Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music*. It seemed appropriate to ask her some questions about singing songs by Bob Dylan.

How would you describe yourself as a singer?

I'd say I was a jazz singer, because I improvise. I try to bring something new to each performance in terms of the notes and phrasing. My personal musical background is pretty eclectic, but is formed from a great love of and singing of the blues and gospel music; that's what my style is based on. Because of the work I've done with Jacques Brel and Kurt Weill material, people have tended to look on my work as European based. I'm often described as a chansonnier or chanteuse, and I'm happy enough with that, but if I'm asked what I do - I'm a jazz singer.

Any heroes or heroines?

Nina Simone, Nina Simone, Nina Simone. An extraordinary woman and an extraordinary performer.

And one who recorded a number of Dylan songs.

Yes, as has another heroine. I've been fortunate enough to meet Odetta. She came to see me sing in New York last year. I admire her for slightly different reasons. She's a great singer - I love what she does with the blues - but also for her politics, standing on the line and not separating her art from who she is in the world. That's very important to me.

You have talked of recognising aspects of chanson in Dylan's songs.

I see a real parallel between Brel and Dylan; I've started a new show in which I pair Dylan and Brel songs. It's to do with their view of humanity, the span of subjects covered, and their lack of fear when looking at confrontational subjects, including the most vulnerable parts of one's emotional make-up. It lies in the denseness of lyrics, and the predominance of the lyric over the melodic form - though that's not to denigrate the role of the melody in any way.

How did you choose the songs on the CD? Is it something about the song itself, or do you think of how a song will go down in performance?

No, it's not that. I think that if you're any good as a singer you must allow the song to speak through you; you mustn't impose too much upon it. There are many Dylan songs which I love and which I love to listen to, but they don't sing through me, and there's absolutely no reason why you should listen to me sing them. A song has worked for me if I can sit back and listen to it objectively - or as objectively as one can listen to one's own work - and say, 'Yeah, the song's doing something new here for itself.' I don't claim that I achieved that with every song and with the benefit of hindsight there are a couple of songs on the CD which I could have shaved, but at the time I wouldn't have touched it. I was very happy with it, and still am very happy with it.

Can I ask which songs?

Definitely 'Born in Time'. I so loved the arrangement that I lost my objectivity. I don't play the song live any more. I think that tells you everything.

I confess to having thought that if you hadn't recorded 'Born in Time' you could have put a better song (that is, one I prefer) in its place; though I do get the feeling from listening to the CD that you enjoyed singing it.

I loved the song when I did it. I just think I didn't apply the stringent quality control I should have. I've been much more cautious about the songs for the next album.

Any Dylan songs?

'Like a Rolling Stone' and 'High Water (For Charley Patton)' because it's an extraordinary song and because I wanted to make that link with the blues.

I felt that 'High Water' and 'Mississippi' were the high points of "Love And Theft".

'Mississippi' is a wonderful song, but someone else (Sheryl Crow) has done it. I think that "Love And Theft" is musically very interesting. 'Po' Boy' is like a Fats Waller number. I kept thinking 'My God, I didn't know Dylan did this - that's fascinating.' And I do love 'Sugar Baby'. A wonderful lyric, a wonderful piece of writing.

CBS once used the advertising slogan 'Nobody sings Dylan like Dylan'. There are those who would rewrite this as 'Nobody should sing Dylan except Dylan'- the cover version as the work of Satan. You wouldn't agree with this.

The notion that everyone should write their own material is a nonsense which has filled the record racks with drivel, the level of which you wouldn't get past a primary school poetry competition. I don't think that singers should have to write, or that writers should have to sing. Some people who write songs like to sing their own songs and that's great and gives us an insight into what they think about their own songs. I don't like the word covers, but can understand why it is used. When I hear Nina Simone sing Black Is The Colour, I don't think 'There's Nina covering a folk song.' I think 'My God, look at how she got inside that song and turned it inside-out.' That's her job as a singer, that's her artistry. Where Dylan's songs are concerned, I feel that this is a body of work which should live apart from its writer. The songs have a voice of their own. As a singer, it's my job to take on the work of the great songwriters - in this case

a truly great songwriter - and see if I can get inside it. The artistry lies in making the song speak anew. This is why you can listen to Miles Davis play Summertime even though you've heard it done a million times before. Nobody asks a classical musician why they're covering Mozart again. Talk of 'covering' Dylan is an insulting idea, and one that denies the legacy of the work itself.

In songs where Dylan speaks as a male character, you don't change the genders around. 'She' doesn't become 'he'. Is this deliberate?

I think that Baez and Odetta changed the words like that in some songs, but my role as a performer, not just as a singer, is to be ungendered in my work. I can be whoever I want. This allows people to listen to the song; to question the song in a different way.

So the audience should listen to the song rather than the singer?

Exactly. This is what a good singer should enable them to do.

You see yourself as a channel for the songs?

Yes. You must allow the audience to hear the song; otherwise I might just as well be scattling.

How carefully do you listen to Dylan's original version?

I listen to the original quite a lot. I like to have the original in my being, and then I go to the sheet music and work with my arrangers. We put the original version aside, and we play with the song, the chords, the rhythm. If you change the rhythm you have to ask where the vocal stress now sits - does that give you

anything new? Then I like to demo the song and listen to it with the original now back in my mind again.

Do you have favourite versions of Dylan songs by other singers?

I very much liked Marianne Faithfull's 'Visions of Johanna', and I love Aaron Neville's 'With God on Our Side' and 'Ballad of Hollis Brown'. I love that song, and I would have loved to do it, and didn't even bother to try because Aaron Neville had done it all. There were other songs I wanted to do so much; 'Isis' is an example. I couldn't make 'Isis' work. I love 'Isis'; I could listen to Dylan sing it forever.

Bob Dylan can't sing - or so some people say.

I hadn't quite got to grips with this until I had to listen to all the albums over and over when I was doing the CD. I always thought 'Great songwriter, but hmmm..' Then I suddenly realised that I'd missed the point. When I listen to John Lee Hooker, I don't think 'John's speaking, not singing. What a shame that he doesn't sound like Frank Sinatra.' I realised that I'd been applying the wrong criteria to Dylan's vocal performance. I began to hear it as absolutely superb blues singing, I realised that he was actually a fabulous singer. 'Isis' is the great example. Try to sing it yourself, and you think 'Hats off to Bob Dylan.'

BOB DYLAN - THE CLASSIC INTERVIEWS 1965 - 1966

RELEASED MARCH 31, 2003

by Andrew Muir

For someone famed as a recluse and of whom you often read, 'he never gives an interview' it can come as a shock to discover just how many interviews Dylan *has* given. They range from the put-on ones that were a subset of his mid-60s performing act to the grumpy, the gracious and the surprisingly revealing. Sometimes they can be a mixture of all these elements and more. Whatever, he has done tons of the things and they tell us far more than Dylan's media image would suggest.

This I why *The Fiddler Now Upspoke* series of collected interviews is, I would suggest, one of *the* essential items on the shelves of a Dylan fan's library - or at least should be. Even better than reading his interviews on the printed page is hearing them. What we have here are 3 'classic interviews', two from December 1965 and one from February 1966. In my book review column in *Judas!* 5, I came down to answering the question: 'do I recommend this to the *Judas!* readership?'. If I do the same here the answer is straight-forward though it comes in two parts. Part one is for those who do not already possess these interviews on vinyl, tape, disc, or computer audio file already. This is really easy - they are 100% recommended, get your hands on them as soon as you can.

Part two is probably more pertinent to the majority of you reading this. You have them somewhere, perhaps on vinyl but most likely on analogue tape (you remember those - before DATs, Minidisks, CD-rs, MP3s, SHNs etc. etc.?). If you really needed to you could find them and listen to them. In this case - is this release of any interest to you?

I'd still say 'yes' to collectors, for two reasons. Firstly, it is easier to find. I don't know about you but my analogue tapes are now all packed away in boxes and the effort of retrieving the correct tape and then finding the starting place of the interview I want is something I only do when I really have to.



Secondly, and less personally, there is the packaging. Now many of us might like to think that content should be the only consideration, not packaging. Yet when we get a little bundle of round, shiny objects containing shows from a recent leg of the N.E.T., if all other factors are equal, we tend to go first for the one with the nice cover and track listing, not the unadorned disc with only a date written on it.

In this era of D.I.Y. mass duplication - piracy if you will - the official cds we most look forward to owning tend to be deluxe sets with rare photos and fat booklets. It is the same with bootlegs, come to that. So the inescapable conclusion is that packaging does count, especially for the

collector - and the packaging here is excellent. There is a glossy paper booklet with lots of photos of Bob in his coolest period and liner notes by Derek Barker. Everything is put together well and there is a box-like cover to the whole thing to make it look and feel an important item, which it is.

I can't see this being anything other than a success and the first in a series. What you get is 78 minutes comprising of the San Francisco Press Conference, Dec. 3rd 1965; the Los Angeles Press Conference Dec. 16th, 1965 and the Martin Bronstein interview, February 20th 1966. This means you hear classic passages, such as: Dylan defining himself as a 'song and dance man', the description of how 'Like a Rolling Stone' grew out of twenty pages of 'vomit' and the late Allen Ginsberg asking Dylan if he thinks it likely he'll ever be 'hung as thief'. So it goes on; with wit, intelligence and fun. What you hear is a performing artist at work.

Yes, I had them all already - even on disc - but I am delighted to have them together here and so beautifully presented. Bring on the second set!

To order a copy visit the *Isis* website at www.bobdylanisis.com/ClassicInterviews cd.htm

A Different Set Of Rules

Gotta Serve Somebody - The Gospel Songs Of Bob Dylan

a review by Markus Prieur

On my first copy of *Slow Train Coming*, back in the old days, there was a huge gap before ‘Gonna Change My Way of Thinking’, its length depending on the speed with which I could get up, walk over to the turntable, and flip the vinyl so the needle could drop on side two of my first and still favourite Bob Dylan record, kicking off this extremely underrated song, recently rewritten by Dylan himself and re-recorded together with Mavis Staples in Los Angeles on March 4, 2002, almost 23 years after its original take. This was Dylan’s contribution to a most remarkable project by Jeffrey Gaskill, the praise of which is the intention of this article.

It would have been a nice idea to have another huge gap, maybe 15 to 20 seconds, before this raucous blues track by Bob Dylan and his 2002 touring band, indicating its stylistic dissimilarity to the ten gospel songs preceding it. This however, to be honest, would have been the only amendment I would have suggested. The song, which is the only song on the album recorded and mixed by Chris Shaw, who also recorded and mixed “*Love And Theft*”, is indeed a worthy contribution to the project; but a longer gap would still have been nice.

One verse of the rewritten lyrics of the song, starting with ‘Jesus is calling, He’s coming back to gather His jewels.’, somehow foreshadows ‘A Voice From On High’, which was performed later that year. But my favourite lines of the rewrite would be ‘The sun (son?) is shining, ain’t but one train on this track’, and ‘Storms on the ocean, storms out on the mountain too. Oh Lord, You know I have no friend without You’. And of course, I do find the staged dialogue with Mavis Staples simply hilarious, in a good sense.

For more than a year I had been anticipating the release of this collection, after first reading about it on the internet, and then especially some weeks prior to the release, when its own very fine web site www.gottaservesomebody.com was launched, where one can find much info on the project, including credits, liner notes, interviews with singers and musicians, links to their respective web sites, press releases, reviews, thirty pictures from the studio sessions, and by now even a streaming video.

The working title for the album, before it was signed by Columbia, had been *Pressing On: The Gospel Songs of Bob Dylan*, but with 'Gotta Serve Somebody' (a Grammy winning greatest hit, appearing on numerous compilations, and performed frequently in recent years) being synonymous with Bob Dylan's gospel period, the album title has been changed. The delay in release was merely time to negotiate an agreement and for the label to properly prepare for the release.

Having been initiated into Bob Dylan as a teenager in Germany with *Slow Train Coming* and *Saved*, the only two Dylan albums I took to Ohio as an exchange student in the summer of 1981, adding *Shot of Love* a few weeks later, I remember the hard times trying to understand the lyrics of these gospel songs, until I finally could track down the songbooks. The lyrics of these songs have been a part of my life ever since, and whenever Dylan chooses to perform one of those songs these days, it is for me a reason to rejoice.

Still I see *Slow Train Coming* as the finest studio album in music history, and the underrated *Saved* also ranks among my favourite Dylan releases. Understandably, as a believer in Jesus Christ, I do have a different connection to the very personal lyrics of those gospel songs than those with a different or no faith, who also might hear the live performances from those years with different ears. However, most would agree that Dylan's music and singing during that time was great art by any standard, even if they do not relate to the messages conveyed in those songs in the same way I do.

So I just knew that I was going to like this compilation of 'The Gospel Songs Of Bob Dylan', even before its release, when I offered to write a review for this issue of *Judas!* But I had no idea that the performances of those songs and the production of the record would be that good, and that I would like it that much. For me this album is simply one of the finest releases I can recall. I cannot praise it highly enough. But who would I be if I didn't try.

Normally I do not much like cover versions of Bob Dylan songs, and I do not hunt them down. The old slogan 'nobody sings Dylan like Dylan' has some truth to it; and like many others I have more Dylan songs sung by Dylan himself to listen to than time on my hands, so I do not own many of those cover albums of Dylan songs, most of which seem to be compilations of previous recordings by various artists, of songs from various stages of Dylan's career, performed in various styles.

This compilation however is something else. The ten cover versions also feature differing styles, but they all are gospel styles somehow. Moreover, these ten songs were all recorded and mixed by the same fine producer, Joel Moss, and they have all been performed in the studio specifically for this project, with a common aim, thus creating a coherence normally not encountered in cover compilations. The sum here is even greater than its already great parts. Listening to the songs one can also sense that the individual artists wanted to contribute something special to this project, and that they had a personal connection to the lyrics they chose to convey.

All songs on this disc were taken from only two Dylan albums, which had originally been recorded within nine months of each other (May 1979 and February 1980), however all songs bar two from the latter album ('Are You Ready' and 'A Satisfied Mind', which is not a Dylan original) had been performed on stage since November 1979. So all eleven songs on *Gotta Serve Somebody* were regulars during one, two, or all three legs of pure gospel shows, which Dylan conducted from November 1979 to May 1980, but only one song ('Pressing On') has not been performed by Dylan since then (either live on stage or re-recorded in the studio).

Interestingly enough, Bob Dylan's own contribution, 'Gonna Change My Way of Thinking', was the first of these songs to be dropped from his live repertoire, in February 1980, around the same time when the newest song on the album, 'Are You Ready', had its live debut, only a few days before it was recorded in the studio. The latter then appeared regularly on stage in April and May 1980, but only once afterwards, in the fall of 1981. 'When He Returns' became a rarity already in the spring of 1980, and it also had only one fall 1981 appearance after that (with full band, on the same Cincinnati stage where I first saw Bob Dylan perform only 24 hours later).

The majestic concert closer of the gospel tours, 'Pressing On', was not performed at all after May 1980; but 'What Can I Do for You' had ten more appearances in the fall of that year, and another dozen more outings in the summer of 1981. 'Saved' appeared only twice in the

fall of 1980, and ten more times in 1981. 'Saving Grace' had been laid to rest in May 1980 as well, but as we all know, it was gloriously resurrected with three performances in February 2003 in Australia, and then with nine more in April and May 2003 in the US. The other songs on the album had stayed regulars until November 1981, and some of them even appeared frequently until recent years. 'When You Gonna Wake Up' had been rewritten for the 1984 tour, and had only one appearance after this, in 1989. 'Gotta Serve Somebody' and 'I Believe in You' had numerous never ending tour performances over the years, and 'Solid Rock' had 19 appearances in 2002.

I love those gospel songs performed by Dylan, then and now, studio and live. But I also love these cover versions, very much so, ever more with every new listening, which for me is a sign of great recording art. In some of the songs on *Gotta Serve Somebody* the artists do not try to cover the arrangement of the original, but deliberately approach a distinctly different style. The difference is noticeably the strongest with most of the songs performed by the male voices.

The nice groove and fine vocal performance of Lee Williams in 'When You Gonna Wake Up' even make up for the lyric changes he made, and I am grateful that no attempt was made to copy the arrangement of my favourite Bob Dylan studio track. The brilliant rendition of 'Are You Ready' by the Fairfield Four is also very different to Dylan's original, but both versions are great recordings of one great challenging gospel song, written by

one great songwriter. 'Saving Grace', as performed by Aaron Neville, and 'When He Returns', as performed by Rance Allen, sure are presented in a totally different manner than Bob Dylan ever sang or would ever sing those fine songs he wrote. On these recordings, to quote the liner notes, 'we can separate what Dylan is saying in his gospel songs from the drama of his saying it'.

This goes also for the renditions on this album which are a little closer to the arrangements of the original than the ones previously mentioned, as these renditions still are very distinctive in their own right. The joyful version of 'Saved', as sung by the Mighty Clouds Of Joy, is one powerful performance; and 'Solid Rock', equally powerfully performed by the Sounds Of Blackness, even features some members of the original gospel tour band, including Jim Keltner, who in Europe in 2002 got to play this song again on stage with Dylan, only a few months after this recording.

Also closer to the original arrangement yet still very distinctive in their own right are the four remaining gospel songs, featuring four outstanding female lead vocalists. Both 'Gotta Serve Somebody', performed by Shirley Caesar, and 'I Believe in You', performed by Dottie Peoples, are extremely fine sounding versions of great Bob Dylan songs, with extremely committed lead vocals. Absolutely great stuff.

One of my favourite parts on the whole album is the ending of 'What Can I Do for You', as performed by Helen Baylor, and the way she somehow re-translates back into human language what

used to be Dylan's harp solo: 'I wanna know . whatever you want me to . I'll do . I need to know . yes . oh yes . yes . whatever you want me to do, Jesus . tell me . what can I do, yeah yeah yeah yes . when I was down, you lifted me up . when I was sinking fast, you were right there . just . tell me . tell me . anything you want me to do . tell me . what can I do for you?'

However, my personal highlight of this wonderful collection of songs would be the absolutely brilliant rendition of 'Pressing On', performed by the Chicago Mass Choir, featuring on lead vocals none other than Regina McCrary, the background singer 'who told you the story about Jesus before, remember?' (as Dylan introduced her on 20/04/80). I easily could listen to this uplifting performance of 'Pressing On' three times daily for the remainder of my natural life. It simply is the finest cover version of any Bob Dylan song that has ever entered my ears.

The ten performances on this album, preceding Dylan's contribution, are gospel music as good as it gets, no doubt about it. Brilliantly produced, and very nicely packaged, this collection of gospel songs is a very important release, doing more than justice to those wonderful yet often underrated songs, which had been a part of the artistic result of the greatest songwriter of the century believing the gospel of Jesus Christ, making himself a different set of rules.

Temples In Flames

[White Bear WB 13/14/15/16/17/18]

by Manuel Vardavas

You can either take a snapshot or construct a wider overview. Most live bootlegs opt for the former approach. Record a show. Press up as many copies as you think sell. Hope the money rolls in. However, the technology of the times, and it's now-widespread availability to the general public, has given rise to a newer, more intelligent type of release. For lack of a better categorisation, let's call it the 'bootleg anthology', which attempts to fulfil a grander objective. It is not merely a souvenir of a night-out released in order to cash in on the emotions of the present.

This is the fourth White Bear multi-disc set. Whereas the others were the last word on whichever series of sessions or rehearsals that were under the microscope, *Temples In Flames* is the first release by the label which deals with a whole tour. Thankfully the period in question here (the European tour in the autumn of 1987) is one which has provoked much discussion over the years, and finally fans have a chance to listen and appreciate how the shows evolved over the duration of the tour.

This is not exactly an easy tour to digest. As the sleeve notes point out, media reaction to Dylan's second excursion with the Heartbreakers was mixed to say the least. The wholly negative reviews were obviously unjust, but to unequivocally praise the shows is also misguided. Dylan was not

embarking on a tour because he was consciously taking a new direction. This was a legacy from commitments made the previous year, but thankfully the bland performances of 1986 were replaced by the far more dynamic and risky approach of eschewing rehearsals and changing the set at a moment's notice. The Heartbreakers' own sets remained rooted in their tried and tested AOR-friendly domain, (a convenient time to order a drink or two after McGuinn's opening volley of nostalgia tempered with new songs of no merit whatsoever) but as they did not now appear as mini segments of an overall show, their role for the Dylan sets was strictly complementary. As a result, Dylan's new-found connection to his old material was allowed to develop as he saw fit.

I have to confess at this point that my own reaction to the London shows at the time was not exactly ecstatic. It is clear to me now that, at least partially, this was a result of the nature and size of the venue. This was by no means arena-friendly music. Unless you were close enough to the stage to make a connection with Dylan's ever-changing moods, the whole thing came across as perfunctory at best. If the shows had been at, say, Hammersmith Odeon, no doubt we would all have emerged feeling privileged to have been there. The reality was that I remember being in the camp which

concluded that Dylan seemed remote, and I was not in the minority either. Moreover, the short duration of Dylan's sets left a lot of the crowd feeling short-changed. With the passage of time, these gigs have won a place in my heart which was not the case at the time. This tour was the first step in Dylan's rehabilitation as a performing artist; a necessary and vital cathartic cleansing after the disasters of 1984 through to the summer of 1987.

Of course this does not mean that every one of the ninety tracks included here for your delectation is a winner. Sometimes the Heartbreakers just couldn't create anything meaningful when Dylan sprung a surprise on them. The advantages of being a well-oiled machine count for nothing when the roadmap turns out to be have been changed, and no one bothers to announce that it is no longer valid. Take 'John Brown' from Birmingham as an example. Whatever the merits of this oft-derided song, Dylan manages to find a vocal as expressive as any version of the song you care to nominate. The instrumental backing however, can only be described as mediocre at best. The Lynch/Epstein rhythm axis struggle to maintain any consistent tempo and the sense of relief as the song peters out is obvious to all. This is followed by what can only be described as one of the most shambolic renditions of 'Gotta Serve Somebody', ever. Yet two songs later, an exquisite 'I'll Remember You' manages to almost erase the memory of what preceded it.

This pattern continues throughout the six discs. As Dylan venomously growls his way through 'The Wicked Messenger', with

more than just a nod to a blind horse, the band struggle in vain to come to terms with the task in hand. Shortly after the elements come together perfectly for 'License to Kill' and 'Shot of Love'. For every jewel that is 'Señor', 'Tomorrow Is a Long Time' or 'To Ramona', there is also a turgid 'Maggie's Farm' or 'Watching The River Flow'. The raw yet thoroughly ragged version of 'Go Down Moses' from Tel Aviv is balanced by the magical pleading finale to the final show in London; surely one of the jewels of Dylan's entire performing career.

And yet it is precisely these peaks and troughs which make *Temples In Flames* a valid and important release. White Bear have given us five shows (Turin, Dortmund, Helsinki and two Birmingham, plus a bonus disc of assorted tracks), none of which have ever been issued on CD previously. Dortmund was available on vinyl, complete with the McGuinn and Petty sets, but finding one somewhere today is virtually impossible. Add to all that three inserts with informative sleeve notes and the end result is a highly successful realisation of the concept of the package.

The major strength of *Temples In Flames* is it gives one the opportunity to appreciate the impact of the great performances in their original context. If you listen to Hendrix's set at Woodstock, the majesty that is 'Voodoo Chile' through 'Star Spangled Banner' into 'Purple Haze' and 'Hey Joe' only becomes truly apparent when you hear the ill-focused disastrous hour that preceded it. Exactly the same applies here. Either you embrace the whole deal, or don't bother at all.

Some Notes on Bob Dylan *'and the language that he used' - Part 2*

by David Pichaske

I'd like to turn my attention to Dylan's pronunciation. The two most prominent features of Dylan's speech - his elongated vowels and his nasality (low or back, in contrast to a New York high or frontal nasality) - are both prominent features of Minnesota dialect, what Bob Spitz in his biography unkindly calls 'a dopey Midwestern twang' (74). Other prominent features of Dylan's speech - [ah] for 'I' and [keInt] for 'can't' are not Iron Range. Again, we can go into more detail, although the volume of recorded material makes a thorough study of Dylan's pronunciation a project beyond human undertaking. Even confining myself to officially released recordings is overwhelming - thus my title "*Some Notes on Bob Dylan 'and the language that he used'.*"

Dylan's pronunciation is more varied than his vocabulary and idiom, and often his pronunciation of words like 'the,' 'you,' and 'of' varies within a single song. One reason for this is the wide range of linguistic influences I mentioned earlier, but another is the forces of culture mentioned by Stegner: except when he's trying to sound Black or Texan or Mexican, Dylan seems to attempt 'proper' or 'standard' pronunciation.⁶ Usually he succeeds, but and sometimes he fails. His most famous song, 'Blowin' in the Wind,' provides a good example of this phenomenon and the resulting inconsistency: he seems unnaturally careful with 'to' and 'just' (not [tə] or [jIst]), and he has the infamous Iron Range long [o] under control in words like 'roads' and 'knows' - but the [u] and [i] of 'too many people' are given long Minnesota qualities, and 'ears' and 'years' receive the Iron Range unvoiced [s] instead of the normal voiced [z]. The long [o] in 'North Country Fair' shows similar variation: 'go' and 'snow' under control, 'coat' much longer and lower. To pick one small word in one recent song, it's '[tə] make you feel my love' in one stanza, '[tu] make you feel my love' in another. So analyzing Dylan's pronunciation is tricky.

To look first at the long vowels. The most famous sounds in Minnesota English are the elongated [i] and the rounded, usually elongated, back [o]. The long vowel sounds give to Minnesota speech a leisurely pace which Shelton immediately noted in Dylan: 'Mr. Dylan seems to be performing in a slow-motion film. Elasticized phrases are drawn out until you think they may snap.' These long vowels level the language, but they can also add a richness that is useful in a song like 'Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands' or 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine.'

In most of the Midwest, the elongated [i] is slightly diphthongized to [iə], with a weak offglide, like the 'steal' at the end of the third stanza of 'Like a Rolling Stone' or 'what did you hear' in 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall.' Northern Midwestern dialect, however, is a conspicuous exception to this pattern, in that while the [i] is usually long, it is usually pure, especially in front of a syllable beginning with a consonant (*Atlas* III, 21). This sound can be heard in Dylan lines like 'Jeeze, I can't find my *knees*' ('Visions of Johanna') - cf. 'Sheez, Harold' in Mohr, 109 - and 'Kneeling 'neath your ceiling' ('Temporarily Like Achilles') or 'cheeks in a chunk, with his cheese in the cash' in 'Million Dollar Bash.' A nice string of Iron Range [i]s can be found in 'Absolutely Sweet Marie': 'You see, you forgot to leave me with the key / Oh, where are you tonight, sweet Marie?' It goes without saying, of course, that 'been,' in British English [bin], is in American English [bʌn], in Midwest speech frequently [bIn], as in 'Seems like I been down this

way before' ('Señor') or 'the one I've been looking for' ('Tight Connection to My Heart').

The vowel [o] is another hallmark of Minnesotan dialect: it is lowered and usually elongated: the lips are rounded slightly in pronouncing it while the sound is pushed back in the throat. Thus the work 'oh' sounds like the word 'owe.' The sound, almost an unconscious self-parody, is especially prominent in words like 'know,' 'don't,' 'old' 'go,' and 'so.' On Dylan's first album one hears this sound twice in his introduction to 'Pretty Peggy-O': 'I been around this *whole* country, but I never yet found Fennario.' Dylan seems to have attempted to avoid this sound, but it frequently slips in early and late: 'I froze right to the bone' ('Talkin' New York'), 'my children will go as soon as they grow' ('North Country Blues'), 'I believe I'll go see her again' ('Just Like a Woman'), 'shot it full of holes' ('Stuck Inside of Mobile'). The [o] sounds in the second stanza of 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' are under control until 'keep a clean nose,' when Dylan reverts to his native dialect. The fully developed Minnesota long [o] can be heard in the sequence of rhyming last words of the second stanza of 'Highway 61 Revisited': 'nose,' 'clothes,' 'go,' 'know,' but not, oddly, in the 'no, no, no' of 'It Ain't Me, Babe,' which is higher and less rounded than an Iron Range [o]. Good examples of the short version of the Minnesota [o] can be found in the introduction to and early lines of 'Bob Dylan's Blues' on the *Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* album: 'where *most* of the *folksongs* come from nowadays,' 'Now the *Lone Ranger* and *Tonto* were

riding down the line... Someone musta *told* them I was doin' fine.' The [o] in 'Mr. Tambourine Man,' that rich sound painting, is usually Minnesota long: 'no place,' 'toes,' 'go under it,' 'frozen leaves.' This Minnesota [o] crops up in later Dylan: in 'so free,' 'go down,' 'showdown' - on the record Dylan sings 'slowdown' - ('Billy'); in 'my stones won't take' ('Million Dollar Bash'); in 'unnoticed' and 'No, nothin' ever would' in 'Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts'; in 'show me' and 'know me' in 'Emotionally Yours,' in 'no one there' in 'Make You feel My Love'; in the 'bones' and 'grindstones' of 'Tweelde Dee & Tweedle Dum,' and to a degree in 'down the road' and 'go in now' in 'Sugar Baby.'

One conspicuous exception to this exaggeration is the [o] in a final unaccented position, and represented by the letters 'ow,' where like other unaccented vowel sounds it often deteriorates to a schwa: 'fellow' is often pronounced [fələ] ('a fellow callin' you' in 'Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest')... but not, as in some areas of the West, [fələr]. The word is sung and written 'fella' in 'Open the Door, Homer,' and 'Three Kings' prints the phrase 'these three fellas.' Dylan sings [wɪndə] in 'look out your window and I'll be gone' ('Don't Think Twice, It's All Right') and 'from the window I watched' ('North Country Blues') but [wɪndo] in 'Maggie's Farm,' 'Desolation Row,' 'Love Minus Zero/No Limit,' 'It Ain't Me, Babe,' and 'Ballad in Plain D' and 'Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest.' The pronunciation of 'windows were shakin' ('Highland') is midway between the [o] and the [ə].

The Minnesota [e] is relatively pure and elongated, especially in a final position or before a voiced consonant (Herman and Herman 300). A good example in Dylan is 'the Gates of Eden' in the second stanza of that song. Even in a later song like 'I Threw It All Away,' where the [e] is in several lines sustained for a half note, the sound itself remains relatively pure. Sometimes the elongation involves a subtle but recognizable additional [i], turning the sound into a diphthong in a word like 'may' or 'say': [sei]. Two such instances in Dylan are the [e] in 'lady' in the refrain of 'Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands' and the [e] of 'say' in 'say Jeeze, I can't find my knees' ('Visions of Johanna'). The sound can also be heard in 'you must say that I'm young' in 'Masters of War'; in 'you say you're lookin' for someone' in 'It Ain't Me, Babe'; in 'help me in my weakness I heard the drifter say' in 'The Drifter's Escape'; and 'I wish there was somethin' you would do or say' in 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right'. Generally, however, Dylan does not diphthongize [e] in early, middle, or recent songs.

Midwestern [aɪ] is sometimes elongated enough to pick up a [ə] glide to produce a combination like the vowels in 'aisle,' [aɪəl], especially in front of a following [r] or [ld]. However, the *Linguistic Atlas* (III. 15) notes, 'the offglide is generally short and weak' and in Minnesota especially this vowel is relatively pure: 'wild' in 'catch the wild fishes' ('Time Passes Slowly') has a slight glide, as do 'wild west' ('Talkin' New York'), 'fire in the night' ('Sara'), and 'walk the high

wire' ('Clean Cut Kid'). The [aI] sounds in 'Mr. Tambourine Man' are pure - 'skippin' wheels of *rhyme* / To your tambourine in *time*, it's just a ragged clown *behind* / I wouldn't pay it any *mind* - as are 'nobody's child' ('She Belongs to Me'), 'his lady by his side' ('John Wesley Harding'), 'Oh, child' ('We Better Talk This Over'), 'some mother's child' ('Dark Eyes'), and 'precious as a child' and 'every time she smiled' ('Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts' - this in spite of the fact that the sound is sustained for a half note). The words 'tired,' 'wired' and 'child' in the recent song 'Love Sick' have, although elongated, only the slightest of glides. The word 'desire,' however, is definitely a diphthong in both 'Caribbean Wind' and 'Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum.'

In the Upper Midwest the [u] may be elongated, but it does not usually pick up a glide (as it does elsewhere in the States) and does not produce a diphthong (*Atlas* III. 15), except in the words 'you' and 'humor' (see 'weird sense of humor' in 'Ugliest Girl in the World'). In fact the elongated [u] of 'school,' 'two'/'too' 'tooth,' 'shoe,' etc. is clearly 'stronger in Northern speech territory' (*Atlas* III, p. 22). Listen to 'in his school' in 'Only a Pawn in Their Game' and 'finest school' in 'Like a Rolling Stone,' or 'my black tooth' in 'Outlaw Blues, or 'shoe' and 'blue' in 'Please, Mrs. Henry'; listen to the sequence of [u] sounds in the next to last verse of 'Oxford Town': 'Oxford Town in the afternoon / Ev'rybody singin' a sorrowful *tune* / Two men died 'neath the Mississippi *moon* / Somebody better investigate *soon*.' The two sounds in 'the

carpet *too* is moving under *you*' ('It's All Over Now, Baby Blue') provide a good example of the glide which intrudes in 'you' but not into other words with this vowel sound.

For 'roof,' Midwestern preference (66%) is [rUf] is over [ruf] (the vowel sound of 'moon') - *Atlas* III. 251. Likewise [rUt] is preferred over [rut] for root, especially in Northern Midwest (*Atlas* III, 252). Dylan does not reflect these preferences. He sings [rut] in 'I bit into the root' (rhymed with the word 'fruit') in 'Where Are You Tonight?' and 'strap yourself to the tree with roots' (rhymed with the word 'shoots') in 'You Ain't Goin' Nowhere'. He sings [ruf] in 'Joey' ('almost hit the roof,' also a rhyme word) and *check* 'Summer Days' on "*Love And Theft*".

In the Minnesota version of Upper Midwest American English, the [aU] of 'house,' 'out' and 'about' is lengthened and rounded. Sometimes it is lowered almost to a [u] in a manner reminiscent of Canadian dialect. Dylan does not alter the quality of the vowel, but he sometimes rounds and lengthens it. A good example of this is the sequence of 'houses' in 'The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest.'

Not much needs to be said about short vowels, except that they tend to deteriorate into a schwa. That schwa sound, of course, is the 'uh' sound represented by the letter 'o' in the word 'tomato,' the letter 'a' in 'alone,' the 'ua' in 'equal,' the 'e' in 'father,' the 'i' in 'possible'... in fact, 'one of the most characteristic speech habits of the Middle Westerner is his reduction of most of the unstressed vowel sounds to 'UH,' particularly in informal

speech' (Herman and Herman 300). Dylan's language demonstrates this tendency in examples too numerous to cite, but for whatever reasons Dylan often hypercorrects 'about' and 'alone' to [ebaUt] and [elon] (see 'above the celebration' in 'Changing of the Guard'). Like most Americans, Dylan often reduces the vowel sounds in unaccented 'to' and 'of' to a schwa: [tə] and [əv]. Sometimes *Writings and Drawings* and *Lyrics* print the schwa as an 'a': 'the rest a the stuff' and 'side a them' in '11 Outlined Epitaphs' (pp. 110, 113). But like all Americans, Dylan is inconsistent in his pronunciation of these sounds and words.

Although Minnesota vowels are relatively pure, a slight [ə] sometimes slips in after the [ɔ] of 'four,' the [ɛ] of 'there,' the [aU] of 'prowl' and 'sour,' and ahead of the [u] of 'assure.' Note the glides in 'more assured' ('Desolation Row'), and in 'growl' and 'howl' in both 'Man Gave Names to All the Animals' and 'All Along the Watchtower' (on *John Wesley Harding*, but not on *Dylan and the Dead*). The [ɛ] of 'dead' and 'head' in 'Love Sick' have a slight glide. The glide is not usually apparent in Dylan's 'four': 'twenty-four years' in 'Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll.' Before a final [l], the elongation of [æ] takes the form of [ə] glide, making the diphthong [æə] in 'fail,' 'tail'/'tale,' and 'pail'/'pale.' The sound can be heard in 'on a pale afternoon' ('Masters of War'), in 'fail to understand' ('The Drifter's Escape'), in 'too personal a tale' ('Chimes of Freedom'), but it does not appear in 'pail' in 'Sara' or 'mail' in the final line of 'Desolation Row,' or in 'trail'

and 'tail' in 'Man Gave Names to All the Animals.' 'Pal' in 'One More Night,' although long, has no glide.

A schwa glide sometimes intrudes between and 'r' and an 'l' in words like 'girl': [gərəl], as in the line 'Oh every girl that ever I touched' in 'Restless Farewell' or 'queen of my flesh, girl' in 'Precious Angel,' but it is very slight. The glide does not appear in 'girl by the whirlpool' in 'Subterranean Homesick Blues,' 'lovely girl' in 'As I Went Out One Morning,' or 'that girl is out of sight' in 'Peggy Day.'

In the Upper Midwest, as in many parts of America, 'for' often becomes 'fur' and 'get' often becomes 'git.' Thus 'furgive and furgit.' The pronunciation of 'get' is one thing Dylan seems consciously to correct, with limited success. In his version of 'Highway 51,' it's [gIt] in 'get the gal I'm lovin',' but it's [get] in the last stanza. It's [get] in 'I never did get' ('With God on Our Side'), but its [gIt] in 'get paid' ('Only a Pawn in Their Game') and 'To get him to feel more assured' ('Desolation Row'. It's [fərgIt] in 'don't forget to flash' ('Million Dollar Bash'), but [fərgət] in the last stanza of 'Mr. Tambourine Man,' in last stanza of 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue,' in 'True Love Tends to Forget,' and pretty much everywhere else.

A similar vowel change often occurs in the word 'just,' which is often pronounced like the word 'gist.' In Dylan this pronunciation can be heard in 'I just thought you might like something fine' ('Boots of Spanish Leather'), but in 'Honey, Just Allow Me One More Chance,' 'just' is just 'just,' which seems to be Dylan's preference.

Some fine features of consonant use bear examination. ‘Learnt’ is Midland Midwest, ‘learned’ is Northern Midwest (*Atlas* III. 16). Dylan’s preference is for ‘learned’: ‘I learned from my friend Mouse’ (‘Open the Door, Homer’), ‘I’ve learned to hate the Russians’ (‘With God on Our Side’), ‘before I learned her name’ (‘Peggy Day’), ‘I’ve just learned to turn it off’ (‘If You See Her, Say Hello’),

‘Across’ is Northern Midwest; the word picks up a final ‘t’ below Minnesota line (*Atlas*, III. 16). Dylan’s preference is ‘across’: ‘across that lonesome ocean’ (‘Boots of Spanish Leather’), ‘across the street’ (‘Desolation Row’), ‘all across the telegraph’ (‘John Wesley Harding’), ‘from across the field’ (‘As I Went Out One Morning’), ‘lay across my big brass bed,’ ‘across the mirrored room’ (‘Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts’), ‘Look out across the fields’ (‘When the Night Comes Falling from the Sky’). Dylan sings ‘across’ even when the word is rhymed with ‘frost’ in the line ‘could not get across’ (‘It Takes a Lot to Laugh’). Dylan’s use of ‘amongst’ in ‘I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine’ sounds a little odd to the Midwest ear, a little archaic, as it was perhaps intended to be (it is in this song that Dylan uncharacteristically uses the glaringly grammatically correct ‘whom’: ‘whom already had been sold’).

Like most Americans, 78% of Minnesotans (*Atlas* II, 44) allow a dropped final ‘g’ in words ending with ‘ing.’ ‘I’m goin’ back out’ in ‘Hard Rain’; ‘I’m walkin’ through the streets that are dead’ in ‘Love Sick.’

In some words, ‘d’ or ‘t’ followed by ‘y’ becomes a ‘j’ or a ‘ch’: listen carefully to ‘made your mind up’ (Make You Feel My Love), or ‘don’t you just come out once and scream it’ (‘Positively 4th Street,’ although ‘but you,’ ‘let you,’ ‘that you,’ and ‘don’t you understand’ all retain the [t]), and ‘ask about you’ (‘Million Miles,’ although ‘what you gotta do’ retains the ‘t’).

A following ‘y’ can convert a [s] or a [t] to [š] or a [č] as in ‘is this your’ - [Izðišər] - or ‘picture’: [plkčər]. In Dylan, note ‘stabbin’ my picture with his Bowie knife’ in ‘I Shall Be Free No. 10’ and some of the refrain lines - ‘Won’t you’ = [wonču] - in ‘Queen Jane Approximately.’ ‘11 Outlined Epitaphs’ (*Writings and Drawings* 106) prints ‘doncha know’ - Dylan’s single usage of this quintessentially Minnesota expression.

Iron Rangers, like other Americans, often drop a final dental or labial - [b], [d], [p], [t] or [ð] - in front of a word beginning with one of those same letters. The sound is transferred to the written form of a preterit verb or participle in spellings like ‘use to’ and ‘prejudice person.’ Note in Dylan the lost [d] in ‘forced to’ (‘With God on Our Side’), the lost [d] in ‘used to it’ (‘Like a Rolling Stone’ and ‘If You See Her, Say Hello’) and ‘used to be’ (‘Highlands’), and the lost final ‘t’ in ‘disconnect these cables’ (‘Señor’). Usually, however, Dylan is careful with these sounds, especially later: ‘drift too far’ (‘I Believe in You’).

Conversely, Minnesotans are more careful about a ‘b’ following an ‘m’ (‘dumb,’ ‘scramble,’ ‘number’) than most Americans. Note Dylan’s ‘numb’ (‘Mr.

Tambourine Man'), 'your days are numbered' ('When the Ship Comes In'), and 'number eleven' ('North Country Blues'). Iron Rangers are also careful of [t] between [n] and [i], as in the word 'twenty,' which elsewhere often becomes 'tweny.' Dylan retains that second [t]: 'twenty years of schoolin'' ('Subterranean Homesick Blues'), 'at twenty-four years' (Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll), and 'on her twenty-second birthday' ('Desolation Row').

Although Minnesotans are more careful with their internal 'r' than most of the rest of the country, the second of two [r]s can disappear in words like 'mirror,' 'error,' 'nearer,' and 'terror.' This can be heard in 'the palace of mirrors' ('Changing of the Guards'), 'glance through the mirror' ('No Time to Think'), and 'parlor' ('Tryin' to Get to Heaven'), although 'til your error' in 'License to Kill' contains both r's. Many Minnesotans also have a problem with the word 'hundred,' which instead of [hʌndrəd] may come out [hændərd] or even [hənərd] or [hənərt]. Dylan very clearly says [hændərd] in 'a hundred miles an hour' ('Motorpsycho Nightmare'), and he clearly says [hændrəd] in 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' and 'It's Alright, Ma,' and he says something about halfway between the two in 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall.'

Dylan always has problems with the letter r. He lost many of his medial and final 'r's early, and as he grew older, things only got worse. Early songs suggest to me that Dylan was consciously trying to lose the 'r' (he was, after all, singing for a New

York coffeehouse crowd), but it slipped back into his speech when he lost concentration. In the rhyming sequence 'bark,' 'mark,' 'spark' and 'dark' of 'It's Alright, Ma' the first and fourth words are pretty crisp, while the second and third are a little light in the 'r' department. Later, he killed the letter almost entirely. In terms of this important linguistic feature, Dylan talks like a New Yawkeh.

The intrusive 'r' of 'warsh' and 'suarsh' is not heard on the Iron Range, although it becomes increasingly common south of the Minnesota line (*Atlas* III, 16).

Unaccented first syllables can easily be lost: 'be' in 'beneath' and 'because' as in 'neath the window' ('Desolation Row') and 'cause I believe in you' ('I Believe in You'); 'un' in 'until' (more northern than below the Minnesota line - *Atlas* III. 16) as in 'til your error you clearly learn' ('License to Kill'); 'a' at the beginning of 'about' ('Song to Woody,' 'Hard Times in New York,' 'Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts').

Dylan often contracts 'of,' 'to,' and 'have' to produce 'kinda' 'outta' (spelled 'outa' in *Lyrics*, 'Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues,' 197, and 'Where Are You Tonight?' 413); 'lotta' (spelled 'lotta' in 'Positively 4th Street,' *Writings and Drawings* 211; spelled 'a lot of' but sung 'a lotta' in 'If You See Her, Say Hello'), 'gotta' ('Gotta Serve Somebody'), 'gonna' ('I'll Be Your Baby Tonight' and 'When You Gonna Wake Up?'), 'wanna' (see especially 'Do Right to Me Baby'), 'coulda' and 'shoulda' (printed 'He should-a stayed' in 'Where Are You Tonight?' *Lyrics* 413). These pronunciations are rampant in the Midwest. In

Mohr's *How to Talk Minnesotan*, see 'feels kinda thick,' 26; 'kinda off my feed,' 40; 'does she kinda squeak,' 53; 'kinda what I thought,' 96). In Keillor's *Lake Wobegon Days* one finds 'gonna' (110, 135), 'gotta' (144, 182, 317), 'oughta' (147, 335), 'mighta' (241), 'donctcha' (285), 'whatcha' (317, 335), and 'kinda' (335). One of my German visitors amused himself (more than others) by greeting everyone he met with 'Hi. My name is Wolfgang. I'm from Germany. Whatcha gonna gimme?' (See Dylan's 'gimme gimme' in '11 Outlined Epitahs,' *Lyrics* 109, 'gonna wanna' in 'Quinn the Eskimo,' or 'whatcha wanna go' in 'Tell me, Momma.')

Although features of Minnesota-Midwest pronunciation can be found in Dylan songs from any point in his career, they are especially apparent in the songs from his early, acoustic period. One of the most popular - quoted by senators and congressmen from Joe Lieberman to, yes, Trent Lott - is 'The Times They Are A-Changin'. It's an early recording, from a time when Dylan was still relatively new to New York City. Like a Midwesterner, he preserves his 'r,' even in phrases like 'your pen' and words like 'mothers' and 'fathers.' He drops his final 'g' on virtually all 'ing' words, a feature reflected in the lyrics printed in *Writings and Drawings*, and drops the first syllable of 'because' in 'because the loser now will be later to win' in a variance that is not recorded in *Writings and Drawings*. He adds an 'a' to the present participle in the song's most interesting linguistic feature - the additional 'a' of 'a-changin'" - but this addition

owes less to dialect than to the need to fill a note in the descending scale on which 'they are a-changin'" is sung ('swimmin'" and 'namin', for example, are not 'a-namin'" and 'a-changin'"'). The vowel in unstressed 'you' is usually reduced to [ə]; unstressed 'of' is [ə], as in 'get out of the new one'; and unstressed 'to' is reduced to [tə] in 'drenched to the bone' and 'later to win.' Dylan's pronunciation of 'the' varies: in an unaccented position it's [ðə]; in an accented position it's [ði]. His pattern of stress is idiosyncratic for a Midwesterner: nobody from the Iron Range - probably nobody in the States - would stress 'the' in the phrase 'admit that the waters,' 'the battle outside' and 'the present now.' Dylan's [i] is Minnesota long on 'please heed,' 'speak,' and 'wheel.' The long 'a' of 'times' has a barely noticeable glide.

The most interesting feature of this song, though, is the [o] of 'bone,' 'stone,' and the various repetitions of 'don't.' In this song, the sound lengthens subtly from the respectable, East Coast [o]s of 'roam,' 'grown,' 'bone' and 'stone' into slightly elongated pronunciations at 'no tellin' who that it's namin'" to a genuine, 24-karat, Iron Range [o] in 'don't criticize what you can't understand.' The [ɔ] of 'your' is given an Iron Range twist. The *Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest* indicates a slight stop or glide in words containing this vowel (researchers did not sample the word 'your') in the speech of most of the Iron Range subjects. Thus [yɔər]. In this song Dylan uses the word 'your' eight times; in five the glide intrudes, and in three it does not. The

phrase 'your sons and your daughters' provides an example of each. The glide is not found in 'for' in Dylan's refrain, although the *Linguistic Atlas* records it in Iron Range pronunciations of homonym 'four,' which researchers did record. On his refrain line, Dylan was more conscious ... and more careful. In this matter, as in the elongated O, Dylan seems suspended between corrected and uncorrected pronunciation; in unconscious moments he reverts, like all of us, to his native tongue.

In the *Playboy* interview, Dylan not only told Hentoff 'I speak that way,' he added 'My brains and feelings have come from there.' Features of language that reflect thought also deserve analysis. Howard Mohr - a humorist and therefore a writer prone to exaggerate traits and overemphasize the eccentric and the unusual - identifies a variety of idioms as peculiarly Minnesotan. Among them the following are the most prominent: 'you bet,' 'whatever,' and 'that's different' ('three workhorses of Minnesota conversation'), 'could be worse,' 'not too bad,' and 'can't complain' ('the power of the negative'), 'oh for [stupid, lucky, dumb],' 'heckova,' 'a guy could,' 'a lotta guys might,' and 'so... then.' These obvious trappings of Minnesota dialect are not found in Dylan.

However, Mohr points out larger traits of Minnesota natives and their speech: Minnesota speech is even flatter than most Midwest speech, and Minnesota phrases and sentences have a level accentual pattern and a flat or falling sequence of pitches which resembles - although it is in

no way attributable to - the flatness of the landscape. A rising pitch might, in Mohr's words, indicate enthusiasm, excitement, or overstatement, which would be 'a big mistake. Minnesotan is not a musical language. Some people with an ax to grind have said it is the musical equivalent of a one-string guitar. What I say is, what's wrong with a monotone - at least you don't startle anybody.' (3). 'If you have to overdo it in Minnesota,' Mohr warns, 'overdo it on the downside, not the upside' (6). Carol Bly, who like Dylan was raised in Duluth, calls Minnesotans 'mealy-mouthed,' and blames the Scandinavian restraint of feeling in general: 'Mealy-mouthed means that when someone has stolen all four wheels off your car you say, 'Oh, when I saw that car, with the wheels stripped off like that, I just thought ohhhhhhhh'' (*Letters* 2).

The point is that the parsimonious use of a leveled language seems to reflect a manner of thinking that is - depending on interpretation - understated, ambivalent, ambiguous, unconcerned or resigned. Dave Van Ronk, in a description recorded in Bob Spitz's biography, remarks on this quality in Dylan's delivery: 'He staggered the words against the music' (123). Greil Marcus, in *Invisible Republic*, describes this flatness as a mask which hides the voice no less than the face: 'the voice it makes you might call Yankee Midwestern, ...the sound of bluesman Frank Hutchison, ...the sound of drugstore speech in Hibbing, ...the sound of William Burroughs waiting out a blizzard' (51, 52). Marcus may hear this voice in Burroughs; Dylan learned it at home, from an early age, in Minnesota.

This ambivalence, useful in telling a tall tale, underlies many Garrison Keillor monologues. In Dylan it shows up in mundane sagas that go nowhere, like 'Clothes Line,' with the downside, mealy-mouthed, small-potatoes ambivalence of lines like 'What do you care?' 'Well, just because,' 'there's nothin' we can do about it,' 'some of 'em, not all of 'em,' and 'sometime, not all the time.' 'Highlands' on *Time Out Of Mind* sounds like a long Garrison Keillor or Howard Mohr monologue, something spun literally out of nothing at all.

This Iron Range leveling may underlie Dylan's tendency, especially in his early work, to even out accent or stress across a string of syllables, words, or phrases. The tendency is quite noticeable, as in 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' in lines like 'admit that the waters' and 'If you can't lend your hand.' Each syllable receives equal weight. Dylan levels his accent elsewhere in that song, and he used the even, almost staccato delivery throughout his career.

Ambivalence may be stoicism. It may be lowered expectations: Keillor warns, 'left to our own devices, we Wobegonians go straight for the small potatoes.' It may reflect the understanding that things could be worse, that others have things a whole lot worse, so don't complain. 'Things could be worse' is something Minnesotans are taught from an early age: after a disaster like a tornado, Mohr suggests, the proper response is 'It could be worse. I think we can salvage some of the lumber from the barn. That pile over there looks pretty good. It'll be a smaller

barn' (8). In 'Only a Pawn in Their Game,' Dylan projects this notion into the minds of southern politicians: 'You've got more than the blacks, don't complain.' Dylan's own persona may provide the best example of 'small potatoes thinking' in his work: the prophet preaching his Jeremiad is usually a scruffy ragamuffin with mussed hair, scraggly beard, and dirty jeans, reticent, reluctant to lead, ambivalent about himself and the world, consistently avoiding the limelight, insisting 'I'm just average, common too, / I'm just like him, the same as you / I'm everybody's brother and son / I ain't different from anyone / Ain't no use a-talking to me / It's just the same as talking to you' ('I shall be Free No. 10').

But I have drifted into character here. I'd like to pull myself back to language with one final observation on North Country landscape and its effect on speech. That is weather. In chapter three of *Invisible Republic*, Greil Marcus makes quite a to-do about Dylan's focus on weather in the *Basement Tapes*, with all its various metaphysical expansions, and admittedly there is a lot of apocalypse - and grace - to Dylan's use of weather, one song to another. Apocalypse is a hard rain that's gonna fall, a wind beginning to howl. Elsewhere, wind, rain, flood, hurricane, snow, or hail may signal isolation, lost love, personal hardship, prison, or death ('Talkin' New York,' 'Farewell,' 'Visions of Johanna,' 'Just Like a Woman,' 'You're a Big Girl Now,' 'Bob Dylan's Dream,' 'Walls of Red Wing,' 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door' - this could be a long list). Love is 'Shelter from the Storm';

grace comes only after a wade through high, muddy water; the personal renewal of a new morning is accompanied by skies of blue. Dylan's symbolic use of landscape deserves extended attention, especially in the implication - in the songs as well as in '11 Outlined Epitaphs' - that what is natural reflects the Master's hand, and what disturbs the balance of nature disturbs a moral and ethical equilibrium as well.

My point for the moment, however, is simply the amount of snow, rain, and wind in Dylan (40 references to 'rain' on a computer search through the on-line concordance; 55 hits on 'wind'). The reason, I think, is simply that Dylan came from the North Country, where snowflakes fall, the winds hit heavy on the borderline, and changes in the weather are known to be extreme. Minnesotans pay attention to weather, are sensitive to weather. As Howard Mohr says, 'If you can't carry on a conversation about the weather in Minnesota, you might as well pack your bags and head back to where you came from' (25). Paul Gruchow, a writer from Montevideo, Minnesota, talks of measuring the winter temperature by the sound of snow beneath a boot heel. Minnesotans recognize 'a blizzard sky.' When Dylan sings, 'I can feel it in the wind' ('Something's Burning'), he acknowledges his roots in the North Country, where you can indeed anticipate a change in weather by a change in the wind, by the smell and the tempo and the direction, and the sound. A wind can be a wicked wind, an idiot wind, a hurricane wind, a 'north wind about to break on

footprints in the snow' ('Never Say Goodbye'). It can be seven sinister breezes blowing around a cabin, or it can be a gentle breeze blowing, you could feel it from inside. Grow up in the Midwest and learn about weather. And in the Upper Midwest weather is wind.

Not everyone appreciates wind and rain the way Dylan does. Bob Spitz quotes Dave Van Ronk's reaction to 'Blowin' in the Wind' as 'Jesus, Bobby - what an incredibly dumb song! I mean, what the hell is 'blowing in the wind?' ' (193). Well. Van Ronk was not from North Dakota-Minnesota-Midwest. He wasn't that color. He didn't speak or think that way. Dylan did when he wrote 'Blowin' in the Wind,' and he still did when he wrote 'Something's Burning.' He's from a place called the Iron Range. He's that color. Still. You might have thought he was moving, but he was really standing still.

6 Descriptions of Dylan's early recording session with John Hammond suggest that Dylan received, and accepted, instructions and corrections.

The Double Entry System and the Roots of Protest

by Andrew Davies

When casually listening to the familiar ‘Fourth Time Around’ with a passive, somnambulistic ear, it is easy to let the song’s soothing melody and performance (assuming the version in question is from *Blonde on Blonde* or a similar era acoustic concert recording) glide over one’s head without any resistance. However, it would be unfortunate to join the ranks of those who dismiss this bona fide Dylan classic as simply a wryly-executed ‘Norwegian Wood’ retaliation. It is within this song, among the eloquent phrases and off beat couplets, that Dylan (and the listener) is reminded that ‘everybody must give something back for something they get’, a statement not of fact but of belief.

It is a fundamental belief that is grained deep into Dylan’s psyche. Trawling through his own lyrics and, perhaps more significantly, in his choice of covers, the necessity to materially or emotionally pay for what has been received or, conversely, to expect payment or reward for a good turn or a job done is a recurring theme. It is an idea grounded in honesty and fair play, a notion that the books must be balanced at the end of the day’s trade. If Dylan has physically or emotionally performed a good deed then he expects his deed to be acknowledged and an equivalent deal done in return. However, his belief in this system makes him careful not to promise too much and almost always points out right from the start that a reward will be expected for anything he does do.

For example, in 'The Man in Me', Dylan tells us with great pride that the man in him will do 'nearly' any task and when the subject of compensation arises he tells us that there is 'little' he would ask. He will not do absolutely anything and everything for the woman that gets through to him and he is careful to include that what he does do will not be completely free of charge. Therefore, although essentially a good-natured, affectionate song, the inclusion of the words 'nearly' and 'little' (meaning 'not much', in this context) act as a kind of disclaimer enabling Dylan to get out of performing any task, be it physical or emotional, should he deem it necessary. He certainly is not offering to 'do anything in this God Almighty world' like he did in his well chosen cover of 'Baby Let Me Follow You Down'. 'The Man in Me' sees Dylan reserving the right to make a judgement before committing himself to performing anything that may be asked of him. Dylan is often vigilant when it comes to not over promising; check 'It Ain't Me, Babe' in its entirety or 'Does She Need Me', an unreleased track from 1966, where Dylan tenderly delivers the line *'I'll try my best to help you'* before swiftly covering himself with a guarantee removing *'if I can'*.

As far as the compensation is concerned, Dylan is often very keen to claim his prize for something he has done and often points out that he expects rewards; seldom does he offer something for nothing. *'When my working day is through, I get my sweet reward, to be alone with you'* he sings in 'To Be Alone with

You'; this is not to say that the song's narrator is not entitled to claim some reward following his day's toil but Dylan makes it known that he feels entitled to said reward, just in case the prize giving ceremony is overlooked. The promise of reward is also Dylan's prime motive in embarking on the journeys documented in 'Isis' (*'If we carry it out, it'll bring a good price'*) and 'Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)' (*'Will there be any comfort there, Señor?'*). This expectancy for reward and belief in the idea that man should receive something in return for an act means that Dylan often assumes that others operate in the same way. There are many examples of Dylan offering rewards as bribes for something he wants from another. For example, in 'Alberta', he promises the heroine of the piece more gold than her apron can hold, if she'll only let her hair hang low. Dylan, then, wants Alberta to hang her hair low and the gold is offered as a bribe; one that the singer expects Alberta to take. The deal is simple: if the hair does not hang low then she will see no gold. In 'Honest With Me', Dylan requests the person the song is directed at to be honest with him; then, and only then, will Dylan be honest with them in return. The point is emphasised by the subversive *'if'* at the beginning of the song's key refrain: *'if you're honest with me, I'll be honest with you.'* Dylan's honesty is offered as reward for the other person's honesty. Again, this suggests that if that truthfulness Dylan seeks is not forthcoming then he will, in turn, withhold his own. Another example of this is found in 'Dear Landlord' with Dylan promising to not underestimate his

landlord if his landlord doesn't underestimate him. Again, there is a suggested transaction taking place, a deal between Dylan and the other person within the situation. The line *'I'd have done anything for that woman, if she'd only made me feel obligated'* is interesting because Dylan manages to justify not doing 'anything' for the woman in question because she didn't do anything for him. Consequently, he feels as though she has done nothing that requires him to repay her. Again, the implication is that if the woman had made Dylan feel obligated then he would have been aware of his duty and behaved accordingly. Dylan has respect for the 'eye for an eye' transaction and in 'The Groom's Still Waiting at the Altar', the woman does not, in Dylan's eyes, contribute her end of any bargain (whatever that may be) and therefore, Dylan is satisfied that he has no bond obligation to honour.

When these deals collapse and a good turn is not reciprocated or a duty goes unpaid, Dylan often finds himself either saddened or offended; riddled with heart-break or unfairness. The above examples are small scale when compared to massive calls of injustice of the magnitude of those confronted in, say, 'George Jackson', 'Percy's Song', 'Hurricane' or 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll', but the principle remains essentially the same as it is the imbalance of crime and punishment that riles Dylan or, in the case of 'Hurricane', punishment for no crime at all. All four represent an unfair balance in Dylan's double entry system. In 'Hattie Carroll', only when the injus-

tice has been fully explained with the lenient punishment not fitting the heinous crime does Dylan tell us that the time for the tears has come. 'Hattie Carroll' is a classic Dylan injustice song because not only does he sound like a prosecution lawyer but also he makes attempts to stop the listening jury from fully reaching its judgement until he has fully completed presenting the case. Each 'now, ain't the time for your tears' means, 'hang on, there's more'. Dylan doesn't want the listener to cry for William Zanzinger, Hattie Carroll or even the death of Hattie Carroll particularly; the murder is highly condemnable, sure, but that is not the point here, what Dylan really wants the listener to cry for is the 'six month sentence'. In other words, don't cry for the murder of Hattie Carroll but for the leniency shown to her well-to-do killer. One suspects that if Zanzinger had got a life sentence then the story would have been of no interest to Dylan as the double entry would have been close to equilibrium.

The 'Isis' double entry deal also breaks down for Dylan when it emerges that the casket is empty, prompting him to muse to himself *'When I took up his offer, I must have been mad.'* The opening of the casket proves to be chronically disappointing for Dylan who feels by this point on the 'Isis' journey that he deserves some sort of reward for his efforts. Does Dylan ride back to Isis after this event to claim a sort of consolation prize? If he doesn't go back then the whole journey documented by the song will be materially fruitless. The 'Isis' chronicle doesn't necessarily go

Dylan's way because he doesn't get at the end what he believes he deserves; listen to how he spits out the words during the Rolling Thunder Revue performances of the song.

'Idiot Wind' offers an interesting example when looking at the failure of the double entry formula within a relationship. An antagonistic song (note use of conventional noun) with a sharp-tongued, often-sardonic lyric, 'Idiot Wind' covers much aggressive ground until Dylan finally hits on what has knocked him so hard and prompted him to write such nasty words. He sings *'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'*. It is a breakdown in communication, an imbalance in emotive comprehension; if Dylan and his partner had been able to become acquainted with each other's sacrifices and strike this deal then the need to write such a song, he believes, could have been avoided. Dylan is also stirred into emotion when he feels that he has not got a fair return for his efforts within a relationship. In 'One More Cup of Coffee', he sings *'I don't sense affection, no gratitude or love; your loyalty is not to me but to the stars above'*; the key word here being 'gratitude', an acknowledgement of his efforts that is seemingly not forthcoming. The example is a further expansion of the same sentiment first iterated in 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right'; albeit with the earlier song benefiting from a more indifferent Dylan, less weathered with the woes of ingratitude.

Need and insistence of justice and redemption are also illustrated throughout *Slow Train Coming* and *Saved*; possibly to such an extent that an analysis of these albums perhaps requires a separate paper that fully appreciates them in their own unique context. While the religious period may provide some interesting examples of the double-entry ideology, the songs on those albums and those mentioned above merely represent a scratching of the 'eye-for-an-eye' logic clearly represented in Dylan's vast lyrical canon. Whatever particular further examples individuals may find, a major strand of Dylan's whole argument and philosophy remains summed up nowhere more eloquently and simply than in the transcendent line stuck in the middle of 'Fourth Time Around'.

'Deep River'

Bob Dylan, Tom Petty and the Negro Spiritual

by Richard Jobs

The spirituals, they had a kind of trance to them, a kind of forgetting. It was like a man closing his eyes so he can see a light inside of him. That light, it's so far off and you've got to wait to see it. But it's there. It's waiting. The spirituals, they're a way of seeing that light.

Sidney Bechet, *Treat It Gentle*¹

On 17th October 1987 Bob Dylan, along with hired hands Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers, brought the Temples In Flames tour to a conclusion within the cavernous interior of London's Wembley Arena. With his pallid features caked under a layer of sweat and mascara he stepped up to the microphone one last time and brought to a close his first major tour of Europe in three years not with a popular favourite from his 60s catalogue - as had often been deployed as an appropriate finale throughout the seven-week trek - but with 'Go Down Moses'. The previous appearance of the old spiritual had been during the tour's opening night in Tel Aviv, and along with a sole performance of 'House Of The Rising Sun' in Paris, served as the only material not penned by Dylan to be performed during the tour. Both incarnations of 'Go Down Moses' appear on White Bear's new comprehensive six-disc anthology of the tour, neatly book ending the final disc of the set. No matter how unintentional this might have been on the part of the compilers, this twist of sequencing does much to illuminate the significance of Dylan's return to a style that had been with him since the earliest days of his career.

'The first song of Dylan's I heard was "Every Time I Hear The Spirit",' Harry Weber told Robert Shelton when recalling his days at the University of Minnesota in the early 60s. 'Bob didn't much fuss about it. It was like the Negro spiritual he based it on, except it had a rockabilly beat. A good adolescent lament.'² 'Spider John' Koerner concurs, 'He was writing some songs, but they were those folksy spirituals that were popular, like "Sinner Man".'³ Spirituals remained in his repertoire for a number of years, with two examples of the tradition - 'In My Time Of Dying' and 'Gospel Plow' - appearing on his debut album.⁴ It would hardly come as a surprise within the rich folk milieu of the time that Dylan would be drawn to spirituals. Ever the appropriating artist, he would no doubt have found much to learn from them, especially in an era that was finding an invigorated significance in such songs with the stirrings of the Civil Rights movement.

Over the quarter of a century later, the beleaguered figure on the stage of Wembley Arena - replete in what appeared to be an ill-fitting turquoise blouse and biker boots ensemble - was using 'Go Down Moses' to declare a very personal sense of transcendence. Many there that night no doubt thought it was nothing more than another of Dylan's pious odes; an uncomfortable hangover from what fans distastefully referred to as 'the religious period'. If the Tel Aviv performance of 'Go Down, Moses' had served as the song's only outing it could have been dismissed as nothing more than a felicitous nod to the crowd. Perhaps, on the night, Dylan himself saw no greater signif-

icance in the song beyond that; a happy recognition that he was in the land of his ancestors. Yet, the song carries with it a weight in American musical history that Dylan would no doubt have been aware. 'Go Down, Moses' made its first recorded appearance outside the black community in the early part of the Civil War, when, in September 1861, the Reverend Lewis C. Lockwood wrote of his encounter with the music of black America. 'They have a prime deliverance melody, that runs in this style,' he wrote. "'Go down to Egypt - Tell Pharaoh / Thus saith my servant, Moses - / Let my people go.'" *Accent on the last syllable, with repetition of the chorus, that seemed every hour to ring like a warning note to the ears of despotism.*⁵

Slave masters saw the teachings of the New Testament - brimming with tales of self-sacrifice - as powerful tools in controlling their work forces, but it was to the Old Testament that the slaves were attracted. The stories of freedom taught in the Old Testament, of which Moses freeing the Jews from Egypt is perhaps most famous, were to prove a source of inspiration to the shackled masses in America. Richard Crawford writes, 'By taking a story from the Bible as a commentary on their own lives, the slaves fashioned a spiritual song of sober dignity and moral force. And just as God delivered Israel from bondage, so, the song predicted, would blacks be delivered.'⁶ Lockwood's report of his experience with the music was published in a Northern abolitionist newspaper, and by December the same paper featured a full transcription of 'Let My People Go'. Before the end of the year

the first sheet music version of 'Go Down, Moses' was available to the general public.

W.E.B. Du Bois reductively said of the spirituals, *'I know that these songs are the articulate message of the slave to the world... They are the music of an unhappy people, of children of disappointment; they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing towards a truer world, or misty wanderings and hidden ways.'*⁷ Unsurprisingly, following the end of the Civil War, former slaves were eager to distance themselves from this music. During the early part of the Twentieth Century, race leader James Weldon Johnson wrote, *'The Negroes themselves do not fully appreciate these old slave songs. The educated classes are rather ashamed of them and prefer to sing hymns from books. This feeling is natural; they are still too close to the conditions under which the songs were produced.'*⁸

Yet, the songs have proved to be infinitely more malleable than this might suggest. While tethered to a notion of community, these songs are very much focused upon the belief of an individual's personal freedoms. John Lorell Jr., when writing about the spiritual, illuminates this point further by writing, *'Justice is not inherently a matter of race; if race enters the picture, this is a question of application. The slave realized that to some extent each man was a slave.'*⁹ The spiritual has proven to possess a very much more universal notion of freedom than many originally believed. As Zora Neale Hurston writes, *'The real spirituals are not really just songs. They are unceasing variations around a theme... Like folk-tales, the spirituals are being made and forgotten everyday.'*¹⁰

Dylan had initially had no intention of playing 'Go Down Moses' that night at Wembley Arena. It was absent from the set-list, though the long-suffering Heartbreakers were fast growing accustomed to Dylan's tendency to deviate from an evening's programme. A great deal had changed since the song's previous appearance during that opening night in Tel Aviv, with a sea-change taking place in Dylan's performance. In an often-cited interview with Newsweek, Dylan said that the change took place in Switzerland, *'It's almost like I heard it as a voice. It wasn't like it was even me thinking it. I'm determined to stand, whether God will deliver me or not. And all of a sudden everything just exploded. It exploded every which way.'*¹¹ Until this revelatory moment it seemed to many that Dylan was a figure utterly adrift. During the previous year's touring activities - that went under the rather erroneous title of True Confessions and were again with Petty - there appeared to be a significant spark missing. Many will no doubt rush to defend the 1986 shows, but it is significant that few would hold them as an affirmation of his gift. His creative senses, which had once appeared so alive and unshackled, were now somehow reined in, offering a professionalism that was often entertaining but seldom revelatory. If the biographies are to be believed, by 1987 Dylan's personal life was in equal disarray. Brimming with self-loathing, he was on a personal crusade to drink, snort and hump his way into oblivion. Whatever had once made him so special was somehow now eluding him. Certainly whatever was proving so hard to

grasp during 1986 seemed to vanish altogether during the first half of 1987, when Dylan made the unwise step of touring with The Grateful Dead. Those converging on the vast arenas of Europe in the autumn of 1987 - with only a mint copy of *Knocked Out Loaded* and fresh memories of Live Aid to keep them company - must have had major misgivings about Dylan's current abilities.

Yet, the Temples In Flames tour saw the re-emergence of Dylan's creativity, in a torrential outpouring. What is perhaps most characteristic of the 1987 shows, and the anthology captures it well, is the ceaseless energy that runs throughout these performances. Whether this energy manifests itself in a beautifully executed and crystal-clear 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue' or in a mangled 'Gotta Serve Somebody', from which only the chorus line escapes unscathed, seems entirely down to chance. But, never the less, this effervescent spirit remains constant. No longer restrained by the fears and anxieties of his own achievements, Dylan appeared once again capable of full expression. And, with this in mind, he returned to the Negro Spiritual. That night in Wembley Dylan knew exactly what he had achieved.

Recordings from the Temples In Flames shows remain an uncomfortable listening experience. There is something almost confrontational in each performance, with Dylan's voice on occasion belligerent and surly. Lyrics are sometimes breathlessly trampled upon as words become smeared under Dylan's new delivery style. He reels through the popular favourites, such as 'Like a Rolling

Stone' and 'Rainy Day Women #12 & 35', like a drunk clutching for the next line. Yet a listener acclimatises to the tempestuous nature of the delivery, settling into the often-jarring speed with which these shows are executed. As one becomes familiar with these recordings, it becomes apparent that that for every piece of hurried delivery - in which all subtlety is seemingly lost - there is the exact counterpart in the shape of songs brought to life with the utmost delicacy. The true gems, scattered across this new anthology, are an array of songs reinvigorated with a graceful lucidity. Like moments of unnerving calm, performances such as 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right' and 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine' are given a beautiful limpidity. Utterly captivating, it is impossible to concentrate on much else as they play. While there are numerous examples of this over these shows, perhaps the most truly realised examples of this style come in the shape of 'Tangled Up in Blue' from Dortmund.

The songs from *Blood on the Tracks* are once again at the centre of Dylan's attention during this period, and to favour 'Tangled Up in Blue' seems somewhat unfair to particularly fine versions of 'Shelter from the Storm', 'You're a Big Girl Now' and 'Simple Twist of Fate'. Yet, somehow, 'Tangled Up in Blue' - especially from the 15th September - remains tantalising in a way that not even those other fine songs comes close. If the appeal of this song has been dulled by familiarity and rather lumpen reinterpretations through the years, its glorious recasting here removes any such cobwebs. Here the

song hangs between urgency and restraint, with Dylan taking the utmost care to bring every element of the narrative to life. Here, in a song that is preoccupied with recollection, the translucent quality of memory is truly captured.

What is most striking about this performance is the sympathetic accompaniment of Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers. Perhaps due to their own unfortunately blandish tendencies they have never earned much fondness from the Dylan fraternity, but what they provide here goes far beyond the workmanlike rock of their own work. Dylan has himself stated that the sound he has often sought - that thin wild mercury sound as the quote goes - lies somewhere in the mixture of the guitar and keyboard, and those provided by The Heartbreakers are perhaps as memorable as anything else in Dylan's career. The fluid, yet sinewy, guitar parts of Mike Campbell never encroach, yet prove to be endlessly memorable. Benmont Tench, likewise, achieves a delicate balancing act between taste and character at the keyboards. A passage at the centre of 'Don't Think Twice' supplied by Tench manages to suggest the distant memory of a Blackpool organ, proving to be delightfully buoyant but equally quirky and surprising. After working together for close to two years, Dylan and The Heartbreakers appear to be finally in sync with each other.

The lighter touches supplied by the Heartbreakers are indicative of the re-emergence of Dylan's greatest gift: his humour. If he was beginning to appear to be something of a dour figure during the

early 80s, and - while it isn't immediately apparent - these shows remind us once again of his mischievous spirit. A real joy is to be found in the way that Dylan delivers the words 'Gotta hurry on back to my hotel room' during 'When I Paint My Masterpiece'. If he does have a date with Botticelli's niece, it seems to be nothing more than an afterthought here (her name gets slightly fudged here in Basel). The real pleasure this night is in the chase. 'Sure has been a long, hard ride,' but for now those struggles - while acknowledged and still remembered - are behind the singer. It is a similar delight present in 'Desolation Row' and 'Stuck Inside of Mobile', both of which lose significant sections of their labyrinthine lyrics as Dylan transforms them into the ultimate pop confection. If the pruning of words were the product of laziness - as it so often has been in subsequent years - it wouldn't explain why a song as lengthy as 'Joey' remains complete. To leave these lyrics intact would somehow deprive them of the new, simpler sense of fun that Dylan now appears to find in these songs.

Dylan performed 'Go Down Moses' at Wembley with the full knowledge of the new, fresh vein he had found in his art. Having become hopelessly entangled in his own understanding of his art, he was now liberated. This isn't to suggest some tenuous case that Dylan rediscovered himself as a performer in the old spiritual. He didn't. It was through his own words and music that he found that. The performance of 'Go Down Moses' - despite its many merits - isn't as revelatory as those mentioned above. It possesses

none of the simple beauty present in the true treasures to be found on this set, yet what it does have is assurance. It is possible to hear in Dylan's performance an echo of what James Weldon Johnson encountered in the spiritual during the 1920s; 'As I listened to the singing of these songs, the wonder of their production grew upon me more and more,' he writes. 'How did men who originated them manage to do it? The sentiments are easily accounted for; they are mostly taken from the Bible; but the melodies, where did they come from? Some of them so weirdly sweet, and others so wonderfully strong. Take, for instance, "Go Down Moses". I doubt that there is a stronger theme in the whole musical literature of the world. And so many of these songs contain more than mere melody; there is sounded in them that elusive undertone, the note in music which is not heard with the ears. I sat down often with the tears rolling down my cheeks and my heart melted within me.'¹²

'Go Down Moses' here is a personal declaration on Dylan's part at the sense of liberation he felt he now possessed as a performer. 'All of a sudden I could sing anything,'¹³ he said fourteen years later, with his enthusiasm for the Temples In Flames tour clearly undimmed. The reception these shows received at the time was uniform in its scorn, with the great unwashed leaving the venues largely disillusioned. And it certainly wasn't to be plain sailing from this point on, with the release of *Down In The Groove* just around the corner. But, this was a period that finds Dylan with a new understanding of his art. At the close of the Wembley resi-

dency, as he vanished off into the wings, he was no doubt elated by the realisation that there was still so much to be achieved.

1. Bechet, *Treat It Gentle*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1960) pp. 213
2. Robert Shelton, *No Direction Home* (New York: De Capo Press, 1997), pp. 66
3. Robert Shelton, *No Direction Home*, pp. 66
4. The spiritual remained a significant influence throughout Dylan's career, and it should come as no surprise that it forms a part in the rich weaving of folk traditions in 1997's *Time Out Of Mind*. Benjamin Filene writes in *Romancing The Folk*, 'Critic Alex Ross finds that Tryin' To Get To Heaven alone borrows 'a dozen or more' phrases from the 'Spiritual' chapters of Allan Lomax's *Folk Songs of North America*.' (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 231
5. Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 413
6. Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History*, pp. 415
7. W.E.B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co, 1903) pp. 253
8. James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography Of An Ex-Coloured Man*, in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965), pp. 494
9. John Lorell Jr., *Black Song: The Forge of The Flame* (New York: Paragam House Publishers, 1986), pp. 387
10. Zora Neale Hurston, 'Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals', in *Negro: An Anthology*, ed. Nancy Cunard (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co, 1970), pp. 223
11. David Gates, *Newsweek*, 10/5/97 'Dylan Revisited'
12. James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography Of An Ex-Coloured Man*, in *Three Negro Classics* , pp. 494
13. Mikal Gilmore, 'The Rolling Stone Interview', *Rolling Stone* 882 – November 22, 2001

Philosophical Reflections

by Martin van Hees

Judas! is pleased to introduce a new column, taking a philosophical look at some of Dylan's songs.

Writing about the philosophy of a piece of art is a notoriously tricky affair. By trying to 'analyse and categorise', one runs the risk of deforming and degrading the art in question. Clearly, a column in which the lyrics of Dylan songs are dissected from a philosophical perspective is liable to run this risk, especially when it focuses *only* on the lyrics and ignores all other aspects of the songs. Yet this is precisely the intention of this new column - Dylan song texts (sometimes the entire lyrics, sometimes just a part or only a single line) will be discussed from a philosophical perspective.

However, the aim of the column is not to force Dylan's texts onto the Procrustean bed of philosophy, that is, the object is not to describe the 'philosophy of Dylan' - if such a philosophy can be assumed to exist at all. Instead, Dylan's texts are used, sometimes rather freely, to

illustrate, clarify or even suggest new answers to philosophical questions. In other words, the aim of the column is to use Dylan's work to explore philosophical issues rather than to reveal a 'deeper' meaning of the songs. But of course, in doing so, we hope to underscore the richness and beauty of that work.

*'Motorpsycho Nightmare':
Dilemmas and Predicaments*

It is the moral philosopher's nightmare: in an introductory course on ethics the teacher uses all his skills to make some particular moral point - say, that we all have a duty to keep our promises. Then one of the students gets up, remarks that he is now quite convinced that he has a moral duty to keep his word, 'but', he continues, 'why should I be moral?'

Strange as the question may at first seem, it forms one of the central problems in ethics. If the question cannot be satisfactorily answered, morality becomes a rather pointless enterprise. Socrates

already wrestled with this question, and a long line of philosophers have followed him since. One answer, adopted in one way or another by quite a number of philosophers, is that one should be moral because it is in one's interest to be so. Although there may be situations in which one may profit from breaking one's promises, in the long run it is better to keep them. It contributes to a reputation for sincerity and trustworthiness, for instance, which in turn may be quite useful on other occasions. From this perspective, morality keeps a check on us because it prevents us from succumbing foolishly to our immediate, harmful desires.

Dylan's 'Motorpsycho Nightmare' seems to fit right into such an account of morality, that is, one which draws on the opposition between moral obligations and immediate desires and inclinations. The narrator is allowed to stay at a farmhouse after having promised that he will not touch the farmer's daughter and that he will milk the cows in the morning. At night, the daughter, Rita, comes to visit him and though she earlier formed a temptation for him ('she looked like she stepped out of La Dolce Vita'), he now finds himself in a gender-bender version of Hitchcock's *Psycho* – Rita not only resembles Anthony Perkins but also ominously invites him to take a shower. Thus a classic scenario is presented: there's morality representing what we should do (keep our promises), and there's the temptation to succumb to our immediate inclination (run away). However, what takes it beyond the tradi-

tional picture is that doing the right thing (stay at the farm) is not in the person's interest and in fact may even jeopardise his life (in the final words of the song: he may end up 'in the swamp'). Clearly, this conflict between one's moral duties and self-preservation makes it rather difficult to uphold the philosophical defence of morality described above.

However, another reading of the story which, while admittedly being a very free interpretation, in fact underpins that defence. With this interpretation, doing the right thing does not refer to milking the cows, but to that other part of the promise to the farmer: to not touch his daughter. Rita's proposal to take a shower is still ominous, but her beauty overrides that fact. In fact, the lines 'I knew I had to split, but I did not know how' now indicate that Rita's beauty makes it simply impossible to do the right thing. That is, the lure of Rita and her proposition is so strong that it not only overwhelms the narrator's moral inclinations, but seems to remove them altogether. Doing the right thing - not touching Rita - ceases to be a genuine option, and thus there is no real *choice* between right and wrong: Rita's attractiveness has undermined his freedom of choice. This interpretation, like the first, also seems to endanger the self-interest justification for morality. One cannot claim that the rationale of morality is that it serves one's self-interest if immediate desires can be so powerful that it becomes impossible to resist them. Even though these desires may be very harmful, to argue that in such a situation a person should nevertheless follow the course of

morality falls on deaf ears: morality has lost its grip on us and the claim that morality serves our best interest has become an empty one.

But things are seldom so stark; even when a desire is very strong, it need not remove *all* other options. And, indeed, there is a feasible alternative, and that is to leave the farm. However, the problem here is that the option is inadmissible since it would entail that the obligation to milk the cows in the morning cannot be fulfilled. In other words, there seems to be a moral dilemma after all: either he breaks the promise to milk the cows or the promise not to touch Rita. What first looked like a predicament between right and wrong has turned into a genuine moral dilemma: having to choose between wrong and wrong. But *this* dilemma can be broken, namely by making a statement that so enrages the farmer that he will chase the narrator out of the house. By

doing so the farmer implicitly discharges him from his moral obligations: the dilemma disappears.

Thus in the second interpretation of the lyrics, the song fits well into the justification of morality given by many philosophers: doing the right thing (not getting involved with Rita) prevents one from inflicting harm on oneself (the swamp). The strength of the song, however, is not only that it makes this point in a very funny way; it also contains an important new philosophical insight. As the song indicates, if the bonds of morality are not strong enough, a moral dilemma may bring about a solution for one's predicament. In other words, rather than perceiving a moral dilemma necessarily as a problem, one can also see it as the way out of a predicament. In this interpretation of the song, the moral dilemma does not undermine morality's force, but restores it.



TROUBADOUR

by **Andrew Muir**

A mixture of brand new essays and updated versions of articles that have appeared in a variety of fanzines.
352 pages, Paperback only, 234x156mm

UK...£18.50 Europe...£19.50 USA/Canada...\$40.00
Rest of World...£25.50. All costs include postage.
Available by post from Woodstock Publications
8 Laxton Grange, Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire
PE28 3XU United Kingdom
or order online at: www.judasmagazine.com

This article is the concluding part of a much longer piece, fully entitled:

We Walk the Line:

a Rambler's Guide to the Dylans, Bob and Thomas

The first half, not present here, of this essay is adapted from a lecture given as part of the Dylan Thomas Celebration 2002 at the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea. I want to quote from the introduction to the entire article, then reprint the mainly Bob Dylan section for Judas's readership.

It is not that I find the Dylan Thomas passages uninteresting - the very opposite - but with so much to talk about re 'our Dylan' and pages being limited it seemed the fairest recourse.

*Obviously there is a greater impact in reading it in its entirety and John will be making that available on his personal website at www.touched.co.uk. We will mirror this in the subscribers' only area of our website at <http://www.judasmagazine.com/> where will also display an article entitled The Two Dylans by Mike Jackson from the archives of **Homer**, the slut. However to return to our article at hand, John opened by saying that:*

Since I have come as a guest of the ghost of Dylan Thomas, to talk about the living poet who borrowed his name, Bob Dylan, it seems right to begin on their common ground, which is to say their shared name. From that narrow meeting place I'd like to look a bit wider, at the relationship and the difference between them as artists, and hopefully cast some light wider still, on the relationship and the difference between song-writing and poetry. But to avoid confusion I think I'll have to avoid the Dylan and refer to them, rather inconsistently, as Bob and Thomas.

In the book I wrote about Bob, *The Nightingale's Code*, I dealt quite swiftly with this issue of the common name. In his early years, Bob was dismissive of the connection, as he had every right to be. Book poetry was not a major influence on what he was doing, at least at the beginning. He even went so far as to remark, somewhat petulantly, that he had done more for Dylan Thomas than Dylan Thomas had ever done for him - which I suppose was true, in that more people got to hear about Thomas through Bob than the other way round. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that Bob did know, when he chose his stage-name, that Dylan was the name of a poet - a wild-man poet with an amazing voice. It was also, of course, the name of a Western hero, Marshal Matt Dillon of the TV series *Gunsmoke*, and I think it was the combination of the two meanings - the cowboy-poet - within one sound that was decisive.

I also point out in the book that there was a third resonance, closer to home. Dillon Road, in Bob's hometown of Hibbing, Minnesota, is a back lane on the outskirts that runs between disused mine-workings and spoil-tips. It was the road that one of his first girlfriends lived on, and it's one of the roads leading to the town cemetery. Like the double echo

of the name, that's the kind of yoking together of opposites that's characteristic of Bob. And this particular yoking, of the girl and the graveyard, is absolutely central to Thomas's imagery. In that frame of reference it should be called bluntly the union of sex and death, which recurs in so much of his poetry, especially in the formative notebook poems of his late teens where he found his voice and his symbolism. In Bob's world a better pair of terms would be love and loss - and again they're fundamental themes of his work. But I wouldn't have presumed to make anything of the cemetery on Dillon Road if it hadn't come up in some striking lines from a song Bob wrote in the early 1970s, called 'Nobody 'Cept You':

*Used to run in the cemetery,
Dance and run and sing when I was a child,
And it never seemed strange.
Now I just pass mournfully
By that place where the bones of life are piled.
I know something has changed.
I'm a stranger here
And no-one sees me.*

They're striking because Bob, unlike Thomas, has not been much of a writer about his childhood (though there were other songs from this time which came out on the *Planet Waves* album that also harked back to memories of youth). There's no mention of a girlfriend or of other playmates in those lines, but we can feel her or their presence. For one thing, a child who danced and sang in the graveyard *on their own* I think we would tend to regard as a bit strange. So there's the implication that that freedom is a shared thing. And then when you hear the change that has come over him, that also has to do with fellowship: the thought that the bones provoke is less about the sadness of death than about loneliness and his lack of a companion: 'I'm a stranger here and nobody sees me...' When he was joyful in the presence of the dead, he was not strange to himself; but now that he is mournful as we would expect, he finds himself a stranger.

So if we take those lines as retrospective evidence that he did connect the two ends of Dillon Road in his mind, and suppose that that echo too was part of his reason for taking the name, what does that tell us? Just that the desire to unite or synthesise disparate things was there at the very inception of his imaginative life, as it has proved an abiding feature ever since. Just to give one example, it was Bob, after all, who caused a new-compound noun to enter the language - folk-rock - by melding what had been thought of as antagonistic styles.

From here John moves on from a resume of some of the points in The Nightingale's Code before investigating the development of Dylan Thomas's writing style with Bob Dylan references and commentary whenever appropriate. We pick up the tale again when John is moving the centre of focus back on to Bob Dylan:

Conclusion of

We Walk the Line

by John Gibbens

What had Thomas found on his journey of 20,000 leagues under the sea? He had found the theme which is also his method, of joining everything to everything. But more importantly, or as importantly, he had found in the strength of that muscular, musical voice the incorporation of his physical with his mental being, the completeness he had sunk into the waters in search of - the way that his 'animal' could 'endure burial under the spelling wall'.

It is in this respect that Bob is an heir to Thomas and Thomas a precursor to Bob. He reasserted the energy of sound in poetry, as Bob has carried on doing, in a different way. Thomas took a highly articulate and intellectual form, Modernist English poetry, and invested it with a bodily vigour that is both new and ancient. Bob took rock, a bodily form whose vocabulary was generally limited, and gave it a language which is also both innovative and ancestral.

Or to put it another way, what they have in common is that they both made great records. I think Thomas's recordings - of his own poetry, especially - will be as much of a lasting treasure as his books. His actual voice seems identical with the voice of his poems, in a way that doesn't seem to be true of any of his contemporaries. I have grown to like the recordings of W.H. Auden reading, for example, but the voice I hear there bears little resemblance to the one - or the ones - that I hear

in my head when I read his poetry to myself. The closest parallel to Thomas's readings that I can think of is James Joyce's reading from *Finnegans Wake*, which lends us a key to that weird music.

Of course, Thomas was not original in his sense of sound as such. It is the very definition of poetry, as far as I'm concerned. If you told me you were a poet but you didn't care if your poems rhymed, I would believe you. If you told me you didn't care if they had regular metre, or any form at all, or whether they made sense, or used syntax, or even recognisable words, I would still believe you. But if you told me you were a poet, but you didn't care how your poems sounded, I would think you were a fool or a charlatan, and probably both.

Many writers have offered definitions of poetry, though most of them are not workable. One of my favourites is Wordsworth's: 'Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science.' The definition I'm going to offer is more pedestrian: Poetry is the linguistic art which places a special emphasis on the sound of words. In other words, poetry works particularly with the aspect of language that is arbitrary, irrational, meaningless. By focusing on the physical medium of words, which is sound, poetry can harmonise those higher, more abstract levels of consciousness that deal in signs with the deeper and

more immediate ones that relate to our senses and our feeling states, and also with the biological rhythms that underlie consciousness itself, linking the functions of the brain that we experience as 'non-physical' with the body as a whole. This is not just because the vibrations of speech originate in the body, but because the patterning of word-sound into something analogous to music seems to mirror the communication of brain and body, which is also a kind of music, a harmony of interlocking cycles.

The neurologist Oliver Sacks reported how patients with extensive brain damage who had lost or never acquired the physical coordination to perform everyday tasks like tying a shoelace or even walking properly, sometimes found they could carry them out to music. They couldn't walk but they could dance. What they lost, then, when they lost coordination was a kind of inner tune which choreographs our movements. Music itself, it seems to me, is an image, rendered in vibrations of air, of this inner pattern of vibrations which is how we know our presence in the world. By making music with language, poetry reconnects the furthest reaches of our minds to the pulse of the flesh - or, since they cannot really be disconnected, it deepens our awareness of their connection.

Now by my own definition of poetry, in the part of Bob's art where he works with words, rather than being a guitarist, a harmonica player, a bandleader, a stage performer, he is certainly a poet. His words may not make first-rate poems when we read them in a book but that isn't their purpose. He has to attend to the sounds

they make along with music, and especially in his case, to the patterns his voice makes with them when he sings them. If the words made too much music among themselves, they would drown out the other parts.

A passable analogy is the score of a film. You wouldn't judge a film just by listening to its music - though a film couldn't really be good, obviously, if it had terrible music. And although some soundtracks are listenable in their own right, that isn't a measure of how well they do their actual job. Likewise, a soundtrack that is musically self-sufficient doesn't necessarily provide the best accompaniment to its film.

This simile goes against the way that song lyrics have conventionally been discussed, in terms of settings or accompaniments. The conventions stem from classical song and its 'light music' relations, such as Gilbert & Sullivan, where the composer usually set words that were already written. This order of things became less predominant in the era of Tin Pan Alley and the show tunes that provided the bulk of the so-called jazz standards. Ira Gershwin, for example, almost always followed his brother George's music with his lyrics - though the tunes themselves, of course, were often written for a preordained point in the 'book' of a show.

From his own generally elliptical accounts of his art, we know that Bob has worked both ways. For example, he said that the songs on *John Wesley Harding* (a favourite of mine) were written as lyrics first. From other statements, and from anecdotal and recorded evidence, it's clear that he often - and, I would guess, most often - works from music to words. That

covers a range of techniques: putting new words to an existing tune is one, which was quite common in the early years of his composing. As the researchers dig deeper into his sources, it becomes apparent how many of his melodies were taken over entire or marginally adapted from folk tradition or earlier composers. The practice - inheriting is a better term for it than taking - has been long established and was a particular habit of Bob's mentor, Woody Guthrie. (Not so warranted, in folk tradition anyway, though all too common in the commerce of popular music, is the claim of exclusive property rights over the result.)

The period when Bob was most inclined to these borrowings (or inheritances, or thefts), in his 'folk' years, was also the time when he was most likely to be writing to a 'point' - that is to say, about some subject, telling some story or dramatising some situation which he had decided on beforehand. I wonder, though, how pragmatic these 'decisions' were. I mean, did he select the story of Hollis Brown's massacre of his family and subsequent suicide because, as social documentation or political propaganda, it seemed the most likely to be effective; or was it that the harrowing incident inspired in him a 'vision' of that unyielding musical landscape, almost without relief in melody or harmony or dynamics, that became the 'Ballad of Hollis Brown' - reflecting both an unremitting oppression and the unrelieved South Dakotan landscape, familiar to Bob's youth, in which it took place.

Similarly, was the story of the 'Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' chosen because it best illuminated the

nature of racism in the southern United States, or because a contemplation of the painful image of the repeated falling of the blows of the cane that killed her found an outlet first in the repeated slow motion falling of the song's melodic line?

This seems to be the genesis of much of Bob's poetry: the following of some musical form - perhaps a sequence of chords or a riff actually played on guitar or piano, perhaps only a phrase or fragment in the mind - with a corresponding sequence of vocal sounds. (Although again they may be only 'vocal' in the head.) These may be an actual line or lines of words in sentences, or a jumble of disjointed words and phrases, or a mere smear of vowels and syllables, or most likely a mix of all three. This pre- or semi-articulate vocal version of the musical shape establishes the speech-like tone and cadence and rhythm which the words themselves can attach to. The perfect illustration of the process is 'I'm Not There (1956)' from the Basement Tapes, which may have been a song Bob intended to finish and just never got back to, but which I'm inclined to think he deliberately arrested in an embryonic form. Perhaps because the tantalising phantom of a lyric that he sings best matches the one refrain line that he had fixed - 'but I'm not there, I'm gone'. And perhaps because the ghost-drama into which this speech appears to be shaping seems to be another episode of the forsaking, wounded kind that had recurred in the songs of 1965 and '66 - and that was a scene in which the newly released, repenting and forgiving singer of 1967 was no longer 'there'.

This pre-verbal practice of Bob's is not uncommon among songwriters, I believe. Paul McCartney famously wrote the tune of 'Yesterday' with the words 'Scrambled Eggs' for a refrain. What's intriguing about that story is that he felt he needed *some* words - even ridiculous ones - as a midwife to the tune, to guide it in the way of the cadences of speech. Bob's writing - and my speculation about his procedures may suggest just how misleading that term is - Bob's writing often seems to cleave as closely as possible to the original coherence of words and music, their common fount, and to trust in that for the coherence of the finished song - a coherence of 'feel' - rather than pushing the words to 'make sense' and conform to an extrinsic logic. In other, perhaps no clearer words, he tends to favour intuitive over rational form. He spoke in an interview a few years ago about how important it is for him, once a song is under way, to keep his conscious mind from taking control of it. Perhaps if he had written it, we would still be singing 'Scrambled Eggs'.

The methods of the non-musical poets may not be so different. Consider, for example, Thomas's reworking of 'How shall my animal', where sound patterns had more staying power than the actual words. The idea that a poem primarily conveys a 'meaning', decorated as far as the poet is able with incidental effects of rhyme and rhythm and so on, is belied by the testimony of a number of poets. One of the more provocative is T.S. Eliot in one of his lectures on 'The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism':

The chief use of the 'meaning' of a poem, in the ordinary sense, may be... to satisfy one habit of the reader, to keep his mind diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him: much as the imaginary burglar is always provided with a bit of nice meat for the house-dog.

I take it that the 'ordinary sense' of 'meaning' that Eliot is referring to is the larger, paraphrasable content of a poem, and that he is saying that the poet makes the poem appear to advance an argument, say, or recount an experience according to rules such as we would follow in 'ordinary' language, in order to quiet the part of consciousness which demands information from what it reads. I don't propose, and I don't suppose that Eliot was proposing, that the 'work' which the poem 'does' upon us is done purely by the movements of tone and rhythm in the words, and that all construable meaning in its sentences is secondary to these sounds - that all poetry, in other words, is nonsense poetry in disguise. Nor am I suggesting that a poem is always started off by some inwardly audible pattern, whether of words or non-verbal sounds. Of course the poem may spring from an incident, an emotion, an idea, a sight, a reminiscence or whatever. But what makes this the impulse for a *poem*, rather than for something else, or for nothing at all, is when it gives rise to a form, inwardly apprehended.

But here is where trying to write this genesis starts to try the limits of language - or of mine, anyway. For this form as yet may have no form. Purely speculatively, I would say it may be a kind of phantom

reflex - a complex reaction such as arises in response to speech, but produced in reverse, as it were, produced autonomously, without language, and seeking the language that would give rise to it. This impulse is not just a matter of word-sound or proto-word-sound. It may be imbued with any, and maybe many, of the elements that make up our response to language, such as emotional nuance, visual imagery, and so on. Hence the feeling that poets have often recorded - and Bob Dylan in particular has often stated - of a poem (or a song) already being 'there'. Wallace Stevens put it well in his lecture 'The Irrational Element in Poetry':

While there is nothing automatic about the poem, nevertheless it has an automatic aspect in the sense that it is what I wanted it to be without knowing before it was written what I wanted it to be, even though I knew before it was written what I wanted to do.

The embryonic form, in this theory, is a precognition of the effect that the finished poem should produce in the reader, which the poet aims to reproduce in actual words. 'In my beginning is my end' as Eliot put it. The seed-matter may not be sound itself, but since sound is the first sensory apprehension of language, it seems to provide the thread that leads the poet from impulse to opus. The parallel between this account of a poem's becoming and that initial myth of Dylan Thomas's, of Osiris seeking completion and embodiment, or re-embodiment, through his Isis, seems to me not fortuitous.

But in trying to lead my argument towards a conclusion, I feel I have only

brought it to a crossroads where each path leads on to a far larger unknown territory. In lieu of a finale, then, I'd like to sketch out a couple of ideas on the difference between the music of words in poetry, and the poetry of words for music.

The poets we tend to think of as most musical often achieve their rich effects through large cumulative or nested sentence structures - sentences much bigger than we would ever construct in normal speech, and which test the limits of our linguistic power to absorb them as a whole. Milton is an example, Gerard Manley Hopkins is another, and Dylan Thomas is obviously another. (Think back to those last three verses of 'The Hunchback in the Park', which are all one sentence, moving from the hunchback, to the boys, to the trees, to the woman, and back through the trees, and the boys, to the hunchback.) I think that with some part of our attention, when we are reading, we are able to refer back to earlier parts of the sentence, or to keep its earlier parts in the back of our minds, as it were, in order to keep our syntactical bearings. And it is because we are keeping different phrases reverberating in our minds simultaneously, some parts more to the fore than others, that we get the effect of rich, orchestrated sound from writers such as these. If the structure becomes so complicated that we actually have to stop and turn our focus back on earlier parts of the sentence, then the effect breaks down (though this need not be a fatal fault, since with a second or subsequent reading we may be able to sustain the whole sequence in one go).

The effect doesn't work with the simplest kind of big sentence, which is a list, because each succeeding item tends just to cancel out the one before it. In order for a list to work, the kinds of things in it have to keep changing, which is how Whitman's best lists work, and why his worst ones don't. As an example of the former, from the 'Song of Myself':

Where the laughing-gull scoots by the slappy shore and laughs her near human laugh;

Where beehives range on a gray bench in the garden half-hid by the high weeds;

Where the band-necked partridges roost in a ring on the ground with their heads out;

Where burial coaches enter the arched gates of a cemetery;

Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and icicled trees;

Where the yellow-crowned heron comes to the edge of the marsh at night and feeds upon small crabs;

Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the warm noon...

We're never quite sure where any one 'where' begins and ends - is the garden with the beehives near the shore with the laughing-gull? Are the woods with the wolves within sight of the cemetery gates? And as the items interpenetrate, what would be rather garish in isolation - 'Where winter wolves bark amid wastes' - is absorbed into a much richer tonality.

And as a brief example of Whitman's dull lists, of which the list itself is long, this from 'A Song for Occupations' is far from the worst:

The pump, the pile-driver, the great derrick, the coal-kiln and brick-kiln, Coal-mines and all that is down there, the lamps in the darkness, echoes, songs, what meditations, what vast native thoughts looking through smutch'd faces,

Iron-works, forge-fires in the mountains or by river-banks, men around feeding the melt with huge crowbars, lumps of ore, the due combining of ore, limestone, coal,

The blast-furnace and the puddling-furnace, the loup-lump at the bottom of the melt at last, the rolling-mill, the stumpy bars of pig-iron, the strong clean-shaped T-rail for rail-roads...

In song, big sentences are almost impossible, though lists, albeit on a much smaller scale than Whitman's, have had a good run. The prime form of the list in rock'n'roll and related musics is the itinerary, or more loosely just the gazetteer, like 'Route 66' or James Brown's 'Night Train'. Chuck Berry's fond of that form, too, as in 'Promised Land', and 'Sweet Little Sixteen':

They're really rockin' in Boston

And Pittsburgh, PA,

Deep in the heart of Texas

And round the Frisco Bay,

All over St Louis

And down in New Orleans...

Bob Dylan has produced one very good example of the place-name list in 'Wanted Man', and a more Whitmanesque list-song in 'Gotta Serve Somebody':

You may be an ambassador to England or France,

You may like to gamble, you might like to dance,

*You may be the heavyweight champion
of the world,
You might be a socialite with a long
string of pearls...*

The one who's closest to a Whitman of rock'n'roll, though, is Van Morrison (if rock'n'roll he be). Like Walt at his best, he can build an ecstasy from an accumulation of the ordinary, 'afoot with his vision' as Whitman says in the opening of that great 'Where' section I quoted earlier. The conclusion of 'A Sense of Wonder', and 'Rave On, John Donne', and parts of 'Summertime in England' all take this form of transcendental trainspotting, while 'Cleaning Windows' combines two lists - the agenda of a window-cleaner's day, and a roll-call of the favourite musicians and writers of his youth - in a luminous whole. When Van collaborated with another inveterate lister, the poet Paul Durcan, they came up with 'In the Days Before Rock'n'Roll', one of the best and oddest things he's done.

When the list works well in rock'n'roll (and the more I think about it, the more quintessential it seems, like 'Blue Suede Shoes', the perfect early rock'n'roll song - as distinct from performance - which piles list on list, first the 'one for the money, two for the show', and then the 'burn my house, steal my car, drink my liquor') - it works the opposite way to Whitman's good lists and along the same lines as his bad ones. The good Whitman catalogue is only masquerading as one: it's in the nature of the form that its items should be discrete and equal, but when Walt is on a roll, the elements start to chain-react, firing bits off and fusing into each other.

But the rock'n'roll list is the opposite of cumulative - it erases itself as it goes along. Who cares what the next town is in 'Wanted Man', or what the last one was? The early rock'n'roll songwriters hit on the form, I think, because it made words match the sheer pace but also the carefree, momentary, self-forgetting charge of the music. Bob Dylan combined the two effects in one in 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' - like a fireworks display where the succeeding flashes stay etched on the sky in an overdose of illumination.

In a way this is an equivalent effect to the big, nested sentences in poetry, something Bob did even more spectacularly later on in the same album, in 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)'. But complex as it is in imagery and stanza form, the syntax of that lyric remains, by poetic standards, relatively simple. By piling up masses of short, rhymed, telegraphic phrases, it creates the impression, or the illusion, of the gigantic, coiling, Dylan-Thomas-like, multiclaused sentence. In practice, complex grammar doesn't seem to work in songs - and doesn't have to, because, as in 'It's Alright, Ma', not very much complexity creates the effect of a great deal. For example, Billy Strayhorn's song 'Lush Life' seems - like the creatures it depicts - a creature of mindboggling sophistication, which taken as a whole it is. The cunning stunts of rhyming and enjambment, carried on an exquisite serpentine melody, make the poetry of the lyric, at first listening, seem impossibly baroque. But set down on paper, it is fairly straightforward (again, I mean by poetic standards; as a lyric it has scarcely been equalled for ingenuity):

*I used to visit all the very gay places,
The come-what-may places
Where one relaxes on the axis of the
wheel of life
To get the feel of life
From jazz and cocktails.
The men I knew had sad and sullen
grey faces
With distingué traces
That used to be where you could see
that they'd been washed away
By too many through the day -
Twelve o'clocktails.
Then you came along with your siren
song
To tempt me to madness.
I thought for a while that your poignant
smile
Was tinged with the sadness of a great
love for me.
Oh yes, I was wrong...*

This I think approaches the limit of grammatical complexity in a lyric, which is clearly well short of that in a poem. Parenthetical clauses and the like, the devices that enable the kind of spiralling, knotting, 'Celtic' sentences that Dylan Thomas favoured, tend to fall apart into their constituent lumps when set to music. Though there are beauties to be gained by going against the grain of this tendency, generally the phrases of a lyric need to be more or less self contained.

The reason for this, I believe, has to do with the different movements of time in a poem and in a song. Although Bob Dylan has spoken of songs that can stop time, this seems to me one of those beauties against the grain. When we are listening to a song we have to keep going forward in

time with it - which is why folk-song, in the English-language tradition anyway, is so predominantly narrative. Likewise, John Hinchey's excellent new study, *Like a Complete Unknown*, reveals how many of Bob's songs, even when they appear to have no storyline, have this narrative or, more accurately, dramatic development. In a poem, on the other hand, I think our minds can move more freely in time - we feel ourselves to be in a verbal space, looking back and around as well as ahead.

But this is one of those paths that leads into a far larger territory, so I'll conclude with a couple of examples of poetic effects of ambiguity and complexity achieved in song with the plainest words, and particularly through colloquial imperfections of language. One is from Van Morrison's latest album, *Down the Road*, in the song 'Steal My Heart Away', where he sings:

*There's a place way up the mountain-
side*

Where the world keeps standing still.

Stands still or keeps still we would normally say, but to keep standing still carries a suggestion of its very opposite - a repeated coming to a halt which is not stillness at all. It also suggests, however, something of persistence or endurance - something that 'keeps standing', as a mountain does. In other words, the mountain is a place where the world is still standing as well as standing still. And a third suggestion is that this is a place where 'the world' - not in the sense of the planet but in the old sense of 'the world, the flesh and the devil', the world of human affairs - keeps coming in order to stand still - a viewpoint, a breathing-place

where you stop as you climb the mountain. And all of this suggestion springs from the 'mistaken' insertion of that one word 'keeps'.

And to conclude, and to return to my starting point, an example from Bob Dylan:

*You will search, babe,
At any cost,
But how long, babe,
Can you search for what is not lost?
Everybody will help you,
Some people are very kind,
But if I
Can save you any time,
Come on, give it to me,
I'll keep it with mine.*

This song, 'I'll Keep It with Mine', as befits its subject of seeking, or keeping, or saving, something, but we know not what, is itself an enigma. It appears to have been recorded, possibly as a demo, at the sessions for *Bringing It All Back Home* in January 1965. When it was first released, on the *Biograph* box-set in 1985, one reference in the accompanying booklet gave this date, and another placed its recording six months earlier, at the session in June 1964 that produced *Another Side of Bob Dylan*. During the years that it had circulated on bootlegs, this was the provenance usually given for it, because Bob's piano playing is reminiscent of his playing on some of the tracks from that session.

The riddle grew when a tentative attempt at a version with full band accompaniment appeared on *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3* in 1991. Why the song was abandoned at this point, when a beautiful, fully-realised performance seems only one

more take away, is another mystery. This version was recorded in January 1966, when Bob was laying the groundwork for what would become *Blonde on Blonde*. Although they are separated by little more than a year, the artistic distance between *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Blonde on Blonde* is considerable, and the fact that 'I'll Keep It with Mine' should have survived that distance gives it a unique distinction. What is strange in all this is that the song has no apparent relations among the tracks on *Bringing It All Back Home*, but its combination of colloquial casualness and unfathomable elusiveness is typical of the shorter pieces on *Blonde on Blonde*. So here was a song that Bob, very uncharacteristically for that period, did indeed keep with his.

The life-story of the song is peculiarly parallel with its meaning, in ways that will become apparent. So what is it about? It takes the form of a speech addressed by a man to a woman, who is either a lover or a former lover for whom he still feels tenderness, or a close friend, or someone with whom he adopts a mentor/pupil or elder/junior relationship. These are the connections in which 'babe' seems likely to be heard.

The tone is solicitous: he is offering to help her, in a gentle, unassertive way, and it is this tone that sets the song apart from others of the same period that share a similar scenario. I am thinking in particular of 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue', 'Like a Rolling Stone' and 'Queen Jane Approximately', though this general form of conversation, of the singer giving instructions to a lover or ex-lover, is found

in several key songs: 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right' and 'It Ain't Me, Babe' and 'To Ramona', for example.

In a range of tones from the pleading to the imperative, the same form of address has appeared in plenty of love-songs. Elvis, for example, proved fond of the 'directive' approach, in 'Don't Be Cruel' and 'Treat Me Nice' and just plain 'Don't', in 'Love Me' and 'Love Me Tender', tending as time went on to be more wooing than commanding, as in '(Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear'. The Beatles too took this approach, with more urgency, for their first two singles, 'Love Me Do' and 'Please Please Me'. These pop precursors probably have something to do with the form's recurrence in Bob's early-folk-rock phase.

In the songs of his I cited above, his instruction has roughly the same goal each time, which is to free his addressee from a form of false consciousness. Their tone runs a gamut from the tenderest counsel, in 'To Ramona', through the compassionate but commanding oracles of 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue', to the wrath of 'Like a Rolling Stone', which has been called 'vicious', 'crowing', 'gloating' and so on. I agree with John Hinchey, though, that the tone is a good deal deeper and richer than that. (I am indebted throughout this critique to the intelligence of Hinchey's book *Like a Complete Unknown*.) As many and various performances have proved, it shows different colours as it's turned in different lights, from triumph to grief to righteous anger. As Bob put it: 'In the end it wasn't hatred, it was telling someone something

they didn't know, telling them they were lucky.'

Within this spectrum, 'I'll Keep It with Mine' belongs at the softer end, though a step or two above the infra-red of 'To Ramona'. In that encounter 'I' reminds 'you' of what you already know, and have forgotten you know, though not really through any fault of your own. 'I' invites you to withdraw with him into a freedom which is an interior, as it were, to the external 'forces and fixtures and friends'. In 'It Ain't Me, Babe', you must withdraw from 'I', into your own unshared freedom: 'Go melt back into the night'. In 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue' you must leave: the direction of freedom is no longer inward or 'back into', but outward and onward. The tone is kinder than in 'It Ain't Me, Babe', but the catastrophe is more comprehensive. Your whole world is about to collapse, though you're not necessarily to blame, and you have to get out of it. In 'Like a Rolling Stone', you can't get out of it, and it is your fault. It's a false world of your own creation, and your liberation must lie in letting it come crashing around your ears.

The tone of 'Queen Jane Approximately' is harder to place. A fabric of false relations is shown collapsing, but not in the 'now' of 'Like a Rolling Stone' and 'Baby Blue'; rather in a 'when' that may not be purely predictive. It is something like the 'when' of Paul Simon's 'Bridge Over Troubled Water': 'When you're weary, feeling small'. In other words, if ever this should happen to you (as it could to anyone, as it has to me). For all the satirical bite with which Queen

Jane's dealings with others are portrayed, there is an empathy too in the outraged tone that seems to partake of her own feelings of outrage - a sense that these are mistakes the singer knows all too well. And it is this empathy that he will *then* be able to share with her.

'I'll Keep It with Mine' seems to stand about midway between 'To Ramona' and 'Queen Jane Approximately' in the degree of sympathy it offers and in the distance between 'you' and 'I': neither the physical intimacy of the former nor the definite separation of the latter. 'To Ramona' we picture as an actual conversation, while 'Queen Jane' seems cast in the form of a letter. (The apparently direct address of 'It's All Over Now' is paradoxical. There would be no need, one would think, for someone actually standing by to point out to 'Baby Blue' that the carpet is moving under her, or that the sky is folding. Trying to visualise a setting for this address, I see someone speaking in a kind of divinatory trance, or gazing into a crystal ball - so the emphatic 'now' is actually more of a future. The 'you' of 'Like a Rolling Stone' is distanced in a different way. It's like the 'you' sometimes used in narrative - 'you get up, you go to the door, you go outside and find yourself walking down a strange street' - in other words, a displaced first person.)

'I'll Keep It with Mine' is realisable as a conversation - just. In 'To Ramona' the conversational tone - consoling, advising, encouraging - and the setting - a room in a city - are clear. The elusive aspect of the song is its twisted dramatic course, which starts from a warm physical intimacy -

'Ramona, come closer' - and works its way round to a note of existential isolation, almost of desolation:

*For deep in my heart
I know there is no help I can bring.
Everything passes, everything changes
Just do what you think you should do...*

The conversation of 'I'll Keep It with Mine' is without a tangible location. For no particular reason, I imagine it taking place across a café table. There is a sense of physical distance between them, and also that his encounter with her is brief, a sideshow in her preoccupied life; and that it is public - attested by that edge of urgency ('Come on, give it to me') with which he seeks to hold her attention among 'people', among 'everybody'.

The reality of the conversation is undermined, however, by the almost ungraspable nature of the offer he makes. Anyone to whom this was actually said might understandably answer, what on earth are you on about? End of conversation. And it's presumably to avert this that he begins the second verse, 'I can't help it if you might think I'm odd...' We get the tone - the gallantry, the tenor of concern, the superiority softened by self-deprecation - but what is he saying?

But if I can save you any time...

We expect his offer of help to relate to her 'search', her quest. To save someone time when they are trying to find something means to tell them where it is, or at least to tell them where it is not; which is what he did in the opening lines, telling her she is searching for 'what is not lost'. His offer in the chorus is something else though:

*Come on, give it to me,
I'll keep it with mine.*

On its own this is clear enough: I'll look after it for you, as well as I look after my own. But what is 'it'? The phrase just before seems to make 'it' be 'time' - and then the offer is a conundrum. How can she give him time, and how can he keep it along with his own? Before we go further into this one, consider a second conundrum that coexists with it: the 'it' of the chorus could be the 'what' of the verse - 'what is not lost'. So if she could give it to him, she would discover that she still had it; and if he looked after it for her, she wouldn't lose it again through not realising that she hadn't lost it. (Still with me?) In this way he might not only save her *time*, he might save *her* (any time), since what she has lost (or not lost) is obviously so vital to her that it is worth 'any cost'. Indeed it may well be her *self* that she thinks she must find.

But to return to time: there is one sense in which she can give her time - which is that she can spend time with him. And there is one way that he can keep time - which is in music, in a song. The offer then would be that the time she spends with him will become the time he keeps in his music. And this time, in the piano version of the song, is something wonderfully free and unpredictable.

Time could also be the 'what' that she thinks she has lost; and in this sense it is also her true self - the life she lives when she is not wasting or losing time. 'Everybody will help you, / Some people are very kind': but help that is given to search for something you already have is only helping you to waste time. Hence the shade of sarcasm in

the 'some people' line, which conveys also the opposite of what it says: many people are not kind at all, or some people who seem to be kind, or think they are, are not really so, since to prolong a pointless search, even well-meaning, is not truly kind.

There is a kind of disproportion, a mismatch, between the help offered in the chorus here and the weight of 'your' problem, which we find also in 'Queen Jane Approximately', where to 'come see me' does not seem a very adequate recompense for the scale of unhappiness that befalls her in the verses. The precedent for this was set in 'To Ramona', of course: 'there is no help I can bring'.

Her search in 'I'll Keep It with Mine' is obviously crucial to her - she will carry it out 'at any cost'. But usually you seek to *find* something at any cost, or strive to accomplish something at any cost: the seeking or the striving themselves are not normally said to be done 'at any cost', because they *are* the cost, they are what is expended in achieving the goal. The implication here is that the search itself has become her goal.

This leads us into the second verse:

*I can't help it
If you might think I'm odd
If I say I'm loving you
Not for what you are but what you're
not.
Everybody will help you
Discover what you set out to find
But if I...*

On one level what she is not is what she thinks she has to find. Here then his attitude to her search seems to turn around. He loves her for her questing nature, her dissatisfaction with what she is. It is not the search

that he finds pointless, but its end. The thing that 'everybody' can help her find is not worth the finding - or so he implies, in the very flatness of his statement, the point-less verbal variance of 'discover' and 'find'. We discover what we find, we find what we discover - what's the difference? With its approach to tautology, the line itself fails to discover anything (an effect reinforced, of course, by the echoing of the same portion of the verse before).

The love of you for 'what you're not' ties in with - and perhaps helped to prepare - something that John Hinchey sees in 'Like a Rolling Stone'. He quotes the end of the last verse - 'You're invisible now, you've got no secrets to conceal' - and comments (I quote him fragmentarily):

a visionary 'now'... breaks the spell of the rage-filled 'once upon a time' out of which the song arose. This 'now' is identified with the emergence of your 'invisible' self from the social covering that has made its nakedness a 'secret'. To be 'invisible'... seems to be Dylan's ultimate image for an authentic being-in-the-world. 'You're invisible now', then, is a statement equivalent to 'I see you'...

The song's ending, Hinchey adds a little later, is 'a revelation of a naked self beyond identity, beyond personality, beyond its own creations'.

This key surely fits the lock of our conundrum: this is what you are right to seek 'at any cost', but which we can never really have 'lost'. The personality in this context is what you 'are' - wherein you are like 'everybody' (which is what they can help you to discover); and in this sense of 'are', the true self is what you 'are not' -

which is not like everybody, or even like 'some people'; it is that in which you are not a 'kind', and in which you can be truly loved.

In this courteous kind of conversation, however, the singer cannot force open the door. He can only lay his offer on the table. Which is why the song discovers it cannot get any further, and begins to repeat itself in the second verse. In the third, it becomes aware that it cannot do more than repeat itself, and begins to speak about this in parables:

*The train leaves
At half past ten
But it will be back
In the same old spot again.
The conductor
He's still stuck on the line,
But if I...*

Musically, the first four lines do what they say: at the word 'again' the voice has returned to the same note as at 'ten'. The train seems to be the music itself, the rickety-tick clattering of the piano keys, running up and down. (I may be pushing the bounds of plausibility, but the reference to the number ten, and to half of it, makes me think of the two hands we hear going back and forth on the keyboard.) If the music is the train, then the conductor seems to be the words, 'stuck on the line' in order to come in on time with a rhyme for 'mine'. The train is so appropriate musically that we're not pulled up short by its sudden, unprepared appearance. (It's interesting to see, in passing, how this musical fitness corresponds in effect to Eliot's 'meaning': through it, the lyric gets past our guard without us even noticing.) But how did this

train come to be here? Can it, for a start, be part of the same conversation as in the first two verses? It's hard to see him saying these lines to her: he seems to be musing to himself - musing, perhaps, as he watches the train go with her on board. That sets the rest of the song in a rather different light. It becomes a song of parting; her 'search' is an actual journey, and his plea in the chorus is for some sort of keepsake (albeit an intangible one).

This train, then, seems connected to one of the immortal trains of American song - the one that Robert Johnson watches leaving in 'Love in Vain':

*When the train it left the station
with two lights on behind,
The blue light was my blues
and the red light was my mind.*

If this song stands somewhere in back of 'I'll Keep It with Mine', it perhaps provided the cue for the latter's unusual tone of gallantry, and the idea of holding on to something for her, through the unique and touching image that Johnson begins with:

*I followed her to the station
with her suitcase in my hand.*

The train may be the actual vehicle of her search; it may also be, as I said before, a parable of it. His confidence in its return is a counterpoint to the irrevocability of departure for Johnson in 'Love in Vain'. Hence the very unforlorn tone of this farewell, if that's what it is.

The parable could be parodic, the search, like the train, just coming back to 'the same old spot again'. But this is true only from the point of view of the conductor: while the passengers get off elsewhere, using the train as a means to an end,

he sticks with it, in the same way that she attaches herself to her search.

The return of the refrain, 'But if I -', seems to differentiate 'I' from the conductor, as it does in the earlier verses from 'some people' and 'everybody'. But by its nature the refrain also shows the parallel between conductor and singer, who must keep to the timetable of his song and come back to the same old spot.

He makes his offer again, politely, but he now knows he cannot 'conduct' her any further: after all, if she was going to accept his offer, you would think she'd save him the time of repeating it thrice. Nevertheless the offer stands, and he has made it good: he has kept the time she has given him in the time of his song.

Now we can see how fitting it is that the song should have remained 'unfulfilled' for so long - and why the search for its fulfilment was, apparently, abandoned. The band version, as it gradually comes together, seems to take away the freedom of time we hear in the solo performance, the freedom through which it escapes being a statement merely of futility. It sounds as though Bob, in the very act of seeking the song's completion, realised that he sought something that had not been lost. And rather than let 'everybody' help him, he kept it with his.

Could all this be too much to find in so few simple words and a simple tune? That I'll have to leave to you.