

What they said about *The True Performing of It* in 2019

The book is an outstanding treatment—indeed the only treatment—of one of the most important literary, cultural and historical relationships in the English language. It provides a valuable addition to the scholarship on William Shakespeare and Bob Dylan, but also surpasses the sum of its parts. The book is exceptional, and its greatest strength, apart from the detail throughout, is in the constant juxtaposition of William Shakespeare and Bob Dylan. It is truly a book about both artists, reflecting deep knowledge of and equal interest in both.

Professor Richard Thomas, author of "Why Bob Dylan Matters"

Andrew Muir has used his encyclopaedic knowledge of both Shakespeare and Bob Dylan to write a book which will give enthusiasts for either or both of these geniuses of popular culture many exciting new ways of thinking about them.

Rowland Wymer Emeritus Professor of English at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge.

This is an important and original study. It's also extremely entertaining and full of fascinating details. Andrew Muir's expert view of both his subjects ensures that the connection between Shakespeare and Dylan is revealed to be convincing and significant. One of the most rewarding aspects of this book is the way in which Muir's ideas ensure that a return to the works of each artist is enhanced by what has been revealed about the other - and perhaps most surprising is quite how much there is to discover about Shakespeare in the light of the material presented about Dylan (and not just the other way round).

Christopher Green, Trustee and Director, British Shakespeare Association

This is a book that had to be written, and no-one is better qualified to have pulled it off than Andrew Muir, who has put in the necessary work, and over the long haul, on both bards. He's no fanatic trying to claim Bob Dylan as Shakespeare's equal. Instead, his superbly close attention to the work of each takes us down the often surprising, remarkably rich and unexplored avenue that links the two.

Michael Gray, D.Litt.

Arguably the tour de force of the book is the chapter comparing Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Bob Dylan's album *Tempest*... Reading this particular chapter is absorbing. The depth of analysis, the sharpness of the comparisons, and the sheer amount of detail is staggering.

In closing, it should be noted that the book is a balance between popular interest and academic research. As such, it is not a light read, and is a sophisticated work that would suit those looking for depth, insight and cultural understanding.

Dylan commentator, Tara Zuk: Full review, which originally appeared in ISIS BOB DYLAN MAGAZINE, #203, available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3mw4ver>

Muir's examination of how Dylan uses bits from minstrelsy adaptations of Shakespeare in his recent work is pure dynamite; sparks fly off of the pages. His chapter on sources is the best writing I've read on the topic...*Bob Dylan & William Shakespeare: The True Performing of It* left me wanting more. I give it my highest recommendation. Andrew Muir has done the real work.

Get your copy of *Dylan & Shakespeare: The True Performing Of It*
Amazon [US](#), [UK](#), [Europe](#) Also: [Foyles Waterstones](#) etc.

Dylan commentator and 'source sleuth #1', Scott Warmuth

Full review: <https://m.facebook.com/scottwarmuth/posts/10217545270957193>

All in all, it offers a highly convincing case, spelt out with the requisite textual detail, for the importance and fertility of the Dylan-Shakespeare connection on both causal (source-oriented) and qualitative (comparative) grounds.

Dr Christopher Rollason: Full review: <https://tinyurl.com/y4vv45ce>

Andrew Muir's book looks at aspects of connection between Bob's work and Shakespeare's, but actually you can have no better guide to the magnitude, its scope and scale, of what Bob has been up to over the decades ... Whatever your views on current Bob, or your degree of knowledge or interest in Shakespeare, there is no fan of Bob who won't profit from reading this book, the product of someone steeped, well-versed one might say, in the texts and performances of these collegial bards who command so much of our lives and attention.

Poet Roy Kelly, full review in The Bridge #65 (Jotting Down Notes)

<http://www.two-riders.co.uk/sixtyfivea.html>

Andrew Muir's *The True Performing of It: Bob Dylan and William Shakespeare* is an admirably exhaustive study of the two writers... Muir has synthesized an impressive amount of detail which he marshals in an intriguing way.

Stuart Hampton-Reeves, University of Warwick

Full review, pp 9ff, *Dylan Review* Vol. 1.2, Winter 2019 <https://www.dylanreview.org/>

Amazon:



James

★★★★★ **Life is about creating yourself**

August 5, 2019

This book is enlightening and deep, yet still level and readable. It is an exceptional addition to the bookshelves of those who already appreciate Dylan, Shakespeare, or both and is particularly worthwhile for those who want to learn more about one or the other. Popular opinion, lesser artists, and academia are dispensing with ill-informed dismissals of Dylan's writing and coming to terms with his immeasurable contributions. Of course Dylan deserved the Nobel Prize. He ranks among the greats and his work should be placed alongside the very best. Sometimes it stands up to the scrutiny and sometimes it doesn't. That's the point. But the work needs to be done and, in this case, there's no better person to do it. Andrew Muir is an expert on both Bards and, as time passes, work like this will become the foundation for future scholarship. Indeed, this book would make a fantastic textbook for classes in English literature, drama, poetry, music, performance art, popular culture, and entertainment. It goes deep in all of those areas and deserves wide readership.

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★★★★★ **Raymond Landry**

July 21, 2019

Verified Purchase

Essays focused on two artists tend to include comparisons that feel forced or along the lines of the formulaic comparison/contrast papers our high school teachers required. I thus skeptically approached an entire book that purported to consider two artists not only temporally separated by four centuries, but each primarily engaged in the very different pursuits of drama and song. So I was delighted to find Andrew Muir's book simply flowing with witty observations expressed in a simple and deeply insightful fashion, freed from pretension, informed with a vast knowledge of both Shakespeare and Dylan. Although the obvious connection between the two artists is their supreme use of the English language, Muir goes much further exploring each man's sources, wordplay, career development, religion, and performance considerations and challenges, all within the context of each man's work but also within the context of the historical eras in which each created or has had his creations presented.

And then there's Dylan himself on Shakespeare: "[T]he English language at its peak where one line will come out like a stick of dynamite, and you'll be so what-was-that! But then the other stuff is rolling on so fast you can't even think, and then you have to struggle to catch up to where you are in the present."

This is a book, I believe, for anyone with a deep knowledge of, or just a passing familiarity with, both or either Dylan or Shakespeare. Finally it's a fun and informative read.



Sid Astbury

★★★★★ **ANDREW MUIR DISTILS A LIFETIME OF LEARNING**

19 July 2019

Who better to write a comparative study of the Bard of our times and the Bard for all time than distinguished Dylan author and respected Shakespeare scholar Andrew Muir. He does not claim Dylan is the artistic equal of Shakespeare; in fact, it's a measure of his rigorous approach that he does not do so. What he says is that they both wrote prose to be performed not to be read, that they often dipped into the same sources in the Bible and the classics, and that both were lucky that their careers coincided with a time when younger people were making their voices heard in expressing a yearning for forms of entertainment they could think of as their own. What conjoins them above all else is their joy in delicious puns, in skipping reels of rhyme, in scintillating wordplay. What separates them is that Dylan can't be understood or properly appreciated unless you hear him singing his songs, either in recordings or in concert. As Muir concedes, "if all we had to go on were covers, he would be diminished to an artistic standing of small importance." Shakespeare, in contrast, can only speak to us through the mediation of actors and directors.

★★★★☆ **Super Bards**

24 June 2019

Verified Purchase

Shakespeare and Dylan juxtaposed, compared and contrasted via a range of criteria in a decently heavy academically oriented book that takes various criteria as a focus and examines them critically but with a surfeit of light touches throughout. Muir, who is from poetic stock, is an established and respected Dylan aficionado and expert., has constructed a very interesting piece of work covering a variety of considerations within the extensive opus of each of these two artists who have profoundly influenced western culture.

Definitely worth the read for those who value and love the profound manner in which both these wordsmiths give pleasure through their respective perspectives.

Two Tweets:



Johnny Borgan
@JohnnyBorgan



Replying to @Muir_CSF

I'm very impressed. The architecture of the book makes the complexity of it light as a feather, and both bards are treated with deep respect and even deeper insight.

8:56 AM · Jul 27, 2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

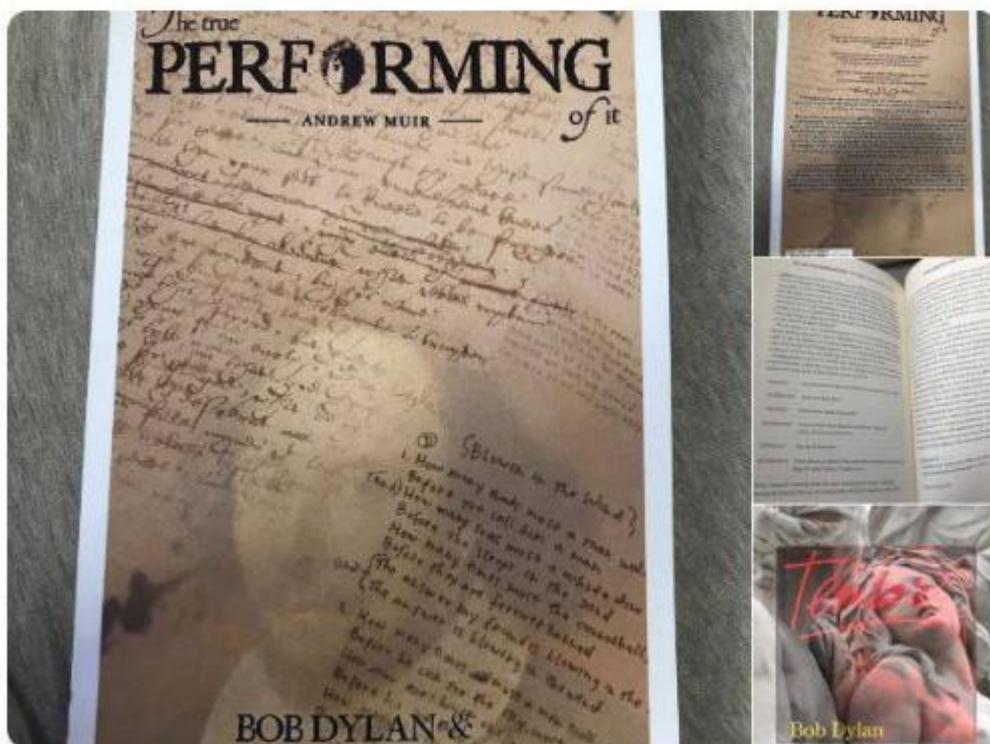


J
@BloodOnTheTapes

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