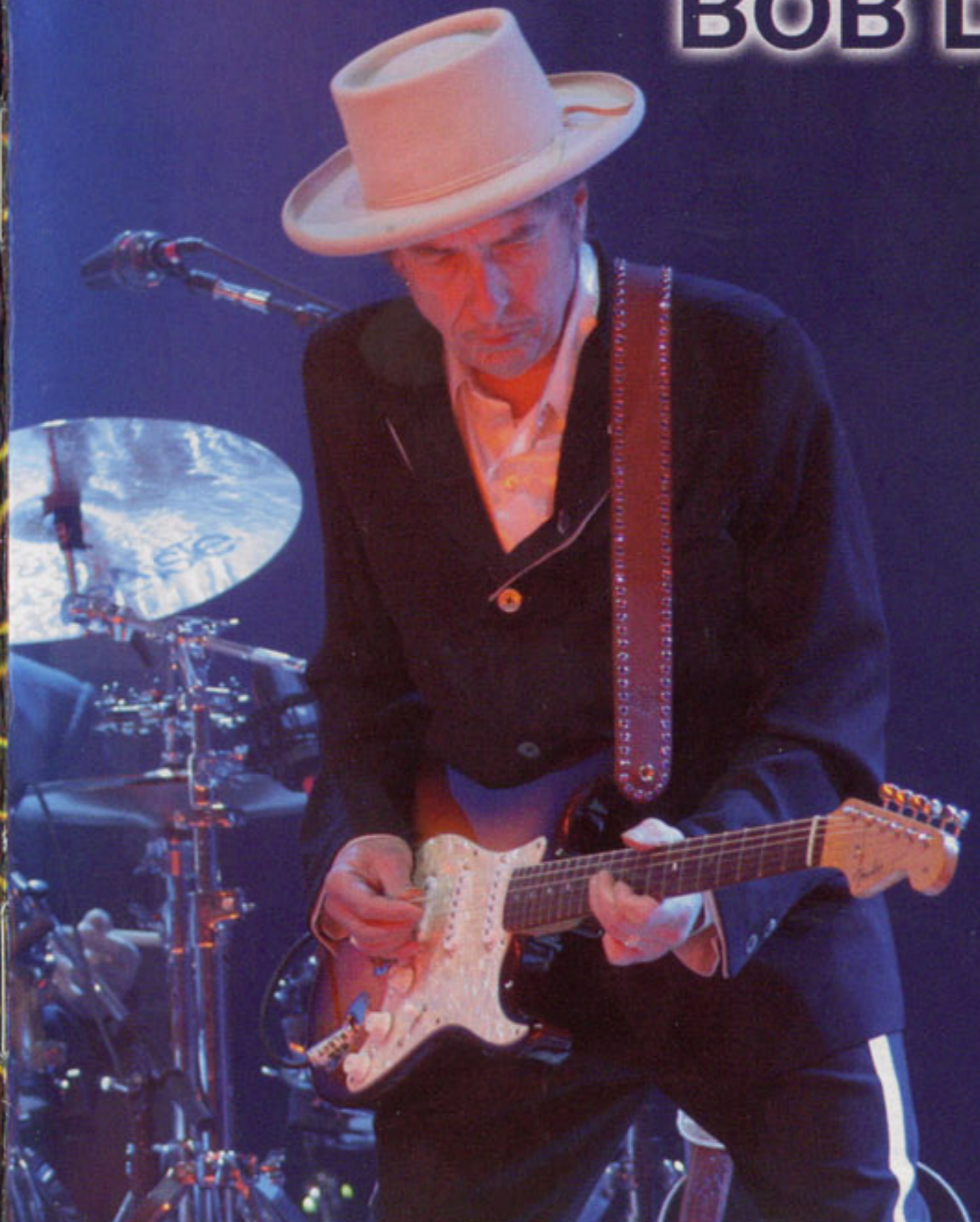


**BOB DYLAN**



Tue. 17 April 2007, National Indoor Arena (NIA), Birmingham, England

Disc 1. 78.52

1. **Intro** 0.38
2. **Cat's In The Well** 3.47 *Bob on elec. guit.*
3. **It Ain't Me, Babe** 5.59 *Bob on elec. guit.*
4. **Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues** 6.36 *Bob on elec. guit.*
5. **It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)** 7.02 *Bob on elec. guit.*
6. **Workingman's Blues #2** 5.23 *Bob on elec. guit.*
7. **'Til I Fell In Love With You** 7.19
8. **Tangled Up In Blue** 7.52
9. **When The Deal Goes Down** 6.06
10. **Highway 61 Revisited** 5.21
11. **Spirit On The Water** 6.31
12. **Ballad Of Hollis Brown** 5.07
13. **Stuck Inside Of Mobile With  
The Memphis Blues Again** 7.37

Disc 2. 79.50

1. **Ain't Talkin'** 8.03
2. **Summer Days** 5.27
3. **Like A Rolling Stone** 6.51
4. **Thunder On The Mountain** 6.09
5. **All Along The Watchtower** 4.41
6. **House Of The Rising Sun** 4.00
7. **I Don't Believe You (She Acts Like  
We Never Have Met)** 6.33
8. **Masters Of War** 4.50
9. **She Belongs To Me** 4.54
10. **My Back Pages** 6.30
11. **High Water (For Charley Patton)** 6.43
12. **Nettie Moore** 7.36

*BONUS TRACKS on Disc 2:*

*Track 6.-8. April 12 2007: Metro Radio Arena, Newcastle, England*

*Track 9.-12. April 14, 2007: Hallam FM Arena, Sheffield, England*

## BOB DYLAN AND HIS BAND

Bob Dylan.....electric guitar, keyboard, harp

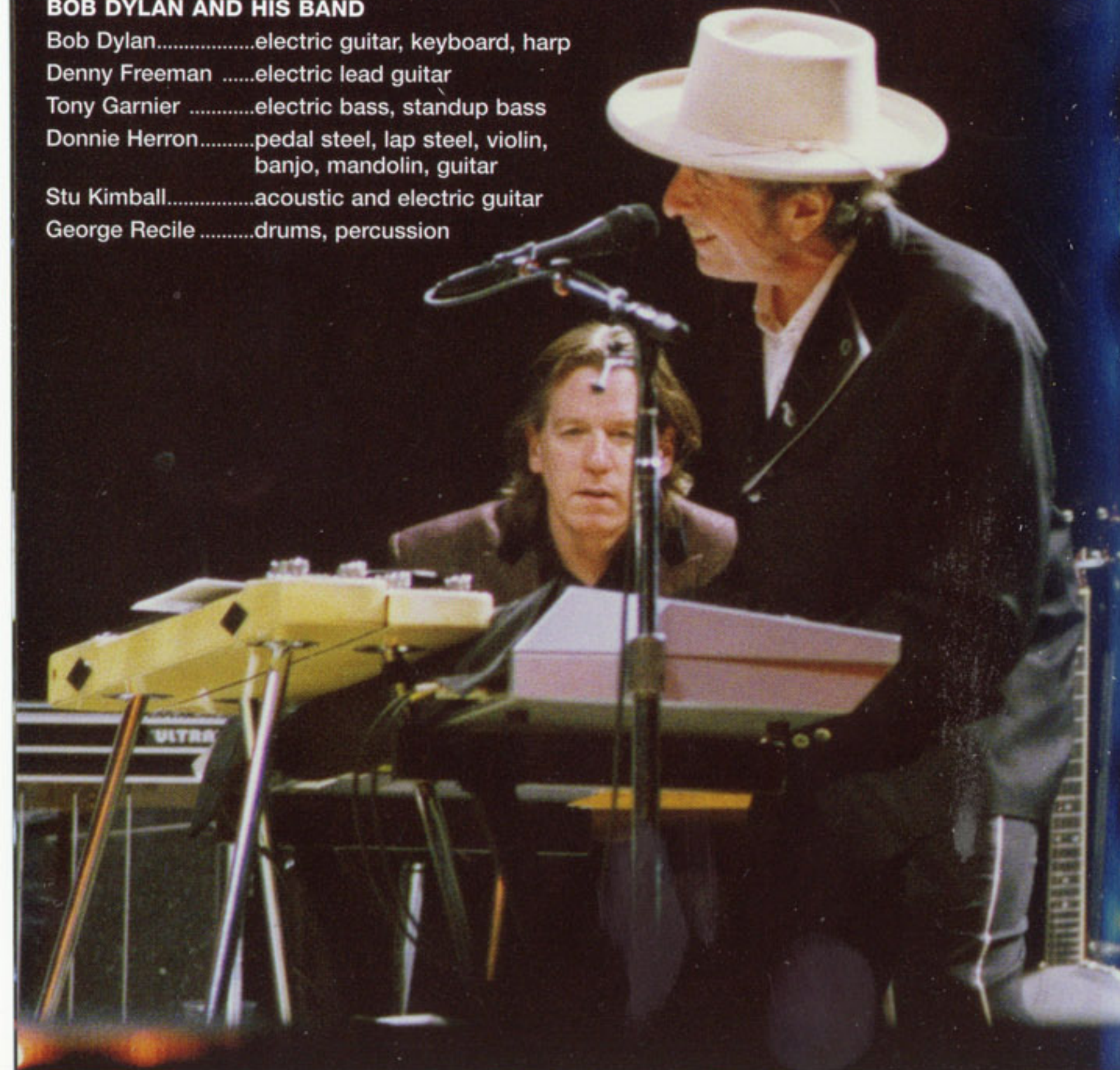
Denny Freeman .....electric lead guitar

Tony Garnier .....electric bass, standup bass

Donnie Herron.....pedal steel, lap steel, violin,  
banjo, mandolin, guitar

Stu Kimball.....acoustic and electric guitar

George Recile .....drums, percussion



**IT'S THE FINAL SHOW OF THE UK LEG** of this spring 2007 tour. Bob Dylan has been on stage for an hour, and has played ten songs thus far. Already tonight, he's shown us a multitude of new directions with these songs, casting light of them from funny angles, making shadows fall in different places. If he called it a night now, he'd have rewarded his audience...

Song number eleven arrived. It was dark, sombre and serious. "Hollis Brown, he lived on the outside of town..." Oh, God he's playing THIS!?

Anyone who picked up a newspaper this morning will have been faced with the shocking images of dead students being carried from US college campus, victims of a mass shooting. By the time tonight's show ended, it had become clear that Bob Dylan has never been immune to such images than you or I. Yet he did not step forth to the microphone and deliver a speech about gun culture. He addressed the matter, as an artist, through the subtlety of his performance. "There's seven people dead on a South Dakota farm". There are 32 people dead on a Virginia college campus.

"Somewhere in the distance, there's seven new people born". And doubtless, in Virginia today, another 32 babies entered this world.

The performance of 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown' tonight provided an uncomfortable Bob Dylan moment. A mass shooting has taken place in Bob's home country: many real, innocent lives have been lost. Can't we all agree this was an act of evil? Dylan performs his own song about a mass shooting. 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown', however, is a song that, far from demonising the perpetrator of the act, compels the listener to sympathise with the murderer. Hollis Brown is trying to support his wife and five children. His

cabin is breaking down, his grass is turning black, there's no water in his well and he has no friends. Unable to find a way out for his family, he spends his last dollar on seven shotgun shells. "There's seven people dead on a South Dakota farm".

To hear Dylan sing this song tonight effectively challenged the easy assumptions we may be led towards by the media coverage of, or own moral outrage at, events such as the shooting in Virginia. He was certainly not telling us to side with the killer. There was no message as clear-cut as that. Dylan invariably complex. If indeed 32 new people are born in Virginia today, into a precarious world where people are slaughtered whilst at college, is their birth a cause for concern or celebration? The dilemmas and ambiguous of 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown' came alive tonight. The Bob Dylan who sang 'Hollis Brown' tonight was the Dylan who sang 'Masters Of War' (not an anti-war song?, remember) at the 1991 Grammy ceremony, during the first Gulf War. It was the Dylan who drew attention to the plight of American farmers at Live Aid in 1985, and the Dylan who said he saw a little bit himself in Lee Harvey Oswald at a peace convention in the mid-60s. Bob Dylan warns us against being too ready and eager to claim the moral high ground. Matters are rarely that straightforward. 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown' was ambiguous, elsewhere in tonight's set, I felt Bob made it fairly plain where his sympathies lie in relation to the Virginia shooting. He can tell right from wrong you know. He sang a version of 'Ain't Talkin'" that was soaked in compassion and humanity, punctuated by anger. The line "Every waking moment you could crack", he sang tonight as "Every waking moment could be your last". The following couplet, however,

remained as it had done on this tour, "I'll avenge my father's death then I'll step back", Bob Dylan never claimed to be a pacifist. Bob's tone had been restrained and considered for most of the show. Even 'Summer Days' was handled carefully, Bob proclaiming "Everybody get ready, lift up your glasses and sing" with almost a sigh. The dignified weariness was more in keeping with a wake than a celebration. It was followed by 'Like A Rolling Stone' which, should you choose to hear it this way, felt like Bob's greatest tribute to the murdered Virginia students. Bob's voice was stepped in regret, particularly as he tackled the second verse; "You've gone to finest schools, alright Miss Lonely". It was emotional to the core. "You realise he's not selling any alibies, as you stare into vacuum on themselves need no alibis. Truly, this felt like a significant performance of "Like A Rolling Stone", The song had found its place in the present moment. Tonight's rendition is the only one I can think of which, far from being diminished by the absence of one of the four verses, was actually enhanced by Bob choosing to sing only three of the four original stanzas. For tonight it would not have been appropriate to sing of jugglers and clowns and Siamese cats. By placing the finest schools' verse at the heart of the song, tonight Bob gave 'Like A Rolling Stone' a dramatic poignancy. There was also poignancy, for me, I've always visualised the two main characters in 'Like A Rolling Stone' - the narrator and 'Miss Lonely' - as being of college age, perhaps 18, 20 or 27 years old. The squabbles being played out in the song - loftily throwing bums a dime, encountering those who insist 'do you want to make a deal', realising there's nothing left to lose - are so very much squabbles of people engaged in my life. They are

squabbles of the young and ambitious, caught up in life's banalities, inequalities and day-to-day struggles. This is what snatched away from 31 young lives in Virginia. I'm not claiming that tonight's show was 'about' the Virginia shootings. I'm saying that, my perspective, Bob Dylan addressed the event, both by paying tribute to the victims and by raising difficult questions about the way we might judge the circumstances of their death. However, if I hadn't heard the news today, I still would have found many, many things in Bob Dylan's performance tonight. Why else, then, might Bob sing a song about a mass shooting - 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown' - if not to refer to mass shooting that had taken place in America the previous day? Here's a thought. Bob also played 'Workingman's Blues #2' tonight. And 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown' is as much a ballad for the working man as it is a morality tale. Tonight, these songs felt like two sides of a coin, (as they always do). 'Workingman's Blues' finds dignity in hard labour, and reflects a tentative optimism. 'Hollis Brown' finds no room left for optimism, for the dignity has gone out of the labour. Potentially, it's short step to move from one scenario to the other. "My poor weapons have been put on the shelf" - 'Workingman's Blues #2' "Your eyes fix on the shotgun that's hanging on your wall" - 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown'. 'Workingman's Blues' was eye-wateringly beautiful tonight. Bob has arranged it carefully, so the tune now provides the trickling, descending lilt of the "Modern Times" version. A subtle alteration to the opening lines caught tonight's mood immaculately: "There's an evening shade settling over town, starlight by the dark of the creek". In contrast to the tentative early versions of this song performed in the US last year, this European debut

of 'Workingman's Blues' seemed to capture both essence of the lyrics and the beauty of the music. A deeply moving listening experience. 'Tangled Up In Blue' was a vivid, atmospheric portrait tonight. Brilliantly sung. Sitting in the seat in front of me was a young lad with his parents - he can only have been five or six years old - and he was nodding his head vigorously during 'Tangled Up In Blue', now and again beating an imaginary drum kit with his fists as the song gained momentum. Fantastic! If he lives to be 101 he can tell his great, great grandchildren that he saw the great, great Bob Dylan play live. Heaven knows how Bob will be thought of then, in year 2101 a mere 140 years after he began performing. So much was happening in tonight in tonight's show. I gathered threads that related to my personal life. There were themes relating to escape, and themes relating to family. Then there were moments where Bob unexpectedly turned a phrase and made it leap out at me as never before, for example when, during 'When The Deals Goes Down', he sang that "The moon gives light, and it shines so bright". It shone like the sun last night. Ideas were

bouncing around everywhere; I was only able to grab hold of few. I liked the concept of Bob throwing 'Tangled Up In Blue' into a "Modern Times" show: "Spirit On The Water" 'Thunder On The Mountain' 'Blood On The Tracks' Looks weird on the page, doesn't it? Tonight, the band flowed as one multi-faced instrument. But of course they did, for every note that escapes the stage is 'Bob Dylan music', and tonight, a fully functioning Bob Dylan meant a fully functioning band. Bob sang tonight with a voice deep and musical, stepped, stepped in empathy and wisdom. My seat was at the back of the National Indoor Arena, so far away and high above the stage, at times I could scarcely make out the white hat shaking above the tiny, black-suited matchstick frame in the distance. It didn't matter. The music got through. This was my last stop on the tour. The end of a journey? In one sense, yes. But in another sense, not. The Birmingham 2007 show will live on, not just in the memory, but in the present.

*Review by Toby Richards-Carpenter*