



Disc 1. 68.19

1. **Intro: Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 9.** 0.57
2. **Watching The River Flow** 4.34
3. **Most Likely You Go Your Way (and I'll Go Mine)** 3.52
4. **I Contain Multitudes** 5.14
5. **False Prophet** 6.47
6. **When I Paint My Masterpiece** 5.35
7. **Black Rider** 4.55
8. **My Own Version Of You** 8.00
9. **I'll Be Your Baby Tonight** 5.08
10. **Crossing The Rubicon** 7.42
11. **To Be Alone With You** 4.18
12. **Key West (Philosopher Pirate)** 9.44

Bonus Tracks Disc 2.

9. **23 June 2023, Barcelona, Gran Teatredel Liceu, Spain**
10. **3 July 2023, Milano, Teatro degli Arcimboldi, Italy**
11. **4 July 2023, Milano, Teatro degli Arcimboldi, Italy**
- 12.-13. **6 July 2023, Lucca, Piazza Napoleone, Italy**
14. **9 July 2023, Rome, Sala Santa Celia Auditorium Parco della Musica, Italy**
15. **26 June 2023, Carcassonne, Theatre Jean-Deschamps, France**

Disc 2. 75.14

1. **Intro** 0.12
2. **Gotta Serve Somebody** 5.33
3. **Band Introduction** 0.58
4. **I've Made Up My Mind To Give Myself To You** 5.48
5. **That Old Black Magic** (song by Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer) 3.28
6. **Mother Of Muses** 5.44
7. **Goodbye Jimmy Reed** 5.50
8. **Every Grain Of Sand** (with Harmonica) 6.29
9. **Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum** 5.08
10. **Bad Actor** (song by Merle Haggard) 3.50
11. **Brokedown Palace** (song by Robert C. Hunter/Jerry Garcia) 4.23
12. **West L.A. Fadeaway** (song by Robert C. Hunter/Jerry Garcia) 5.40
13. **Only A River** (song by Josh Kaufman/Bob Weir/Joshua Ritter) 5.25
14. **Truckin'** (song by Jerry Garcia/Phil Lesh/Bob Weir/Robert Hunter) 5.56
15. **When I Paint My Masterpiece** (with Harmonica) 5.44

## "WHY BOB DYLAN MATTERS"

a book by Richard F Thomas

Virgil, Homer, Ovid ... Dylan?

Review by Sean O'Hagan

AN ACADEMIC'S ATTEMPT

TO SHOEHORN DYLAN

INTO THE PANTHEON OF LITERARY GREATS

MISUNDERSTANDS THE SINGER'S APPEAL

In June 1970, a reluctant Bob Dylan turned up at Princeton University to receive an honorary degree. He had been persuaded to attend by his then-wife, Sara, and his friend and fellow musician David Crosby, but the ceremony so rattled him that he referred to it subsequently in a scathing song called Day of the Locusts. It included the line, "sure was glad to get out of there alive".

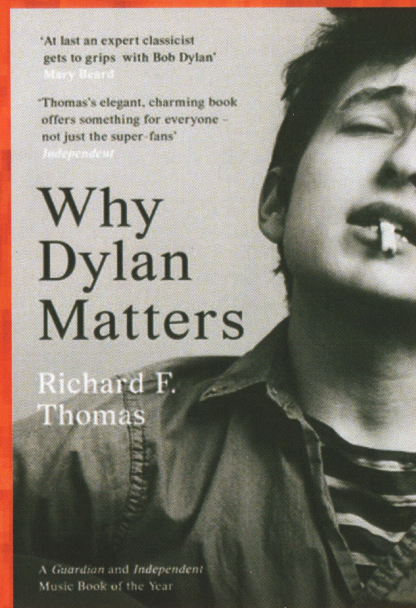
What annoyed Dylan most was the introductory speech in which he was referred to as "the disturbed and concerned conscience of young America". Over three decades later, as the following passage from his 2004 memoir, *Chronicles Volume One*, illustrates, that description still rankled. "Oh sweet Jesus! It was like a jolt. I shuddered and trembled but remained expressionless. The disturbed conscience of young America. There it was again. I couldn't believe it! The speaker could have said many things, he could have emphasised a few things about my music."

Early on in *Why Dylan Matters*, Richard

F Thomas, a classics professor at Harvard, recalls the Princeton incident before setting out to emphasise a few new things about Dylan's music, as if to make amends for the careless words that so offended his subject. Academics have picked over Dylan's songs in the past, most notably the Cambridge don Christopher Ricks, who made heavy work of the myriad allusions therein in his grandly titled *Dylan's Visions of Sin*. In the wake of the Nobel prize in literature controversy, Thomas's timely book goes further by attempting, though not always convincingly, to recast Dylan as an heir to Virgil and Homer. "He is part of that classical stream," asserts Thomas, "whose spring starts out in Greece and Rome and flows on down though the years..."

This may be so, but in affixing Dylan's songwriting to that Graeco-Roman tradition, Thomas is forced to constantly negotiate a line between the scholarly and the tenuous. We learn, for instance, that the young Robert Zimmerman liked Hollywood-produced cod-Roman epics as a boy and was briefly a member of his school's Latin club. How much this proves a deep and abiding affinity with the classics is debatable. Likewise, the number of times that Dylan has included Rome on his touring schedule is hardly evidence of the same given that Dylan tours the world's capitals constantly.

Thomas also cites the relatively minor



Dylan song *When I Paint My Masterpiece* as further evidence of Dylan's love for, and identification with, Rome. One can only wonder what the singer's poetic predecessors would have made of lines as throwaway as the opening verse: "Oh, the streets of Rome are filled with rubble/ Ancient footprints are everywhere/ You can almost think that you're seein' double/ On

a cold, dark night on the Spanish Stairs..." Ovid it ain't.

Thomas is more persuasive when he looks at Dylan's work in light of the other many influences the singer draws on, which range from 19th-century symbolist poetry to early American folk and blues by way of Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams, Chuck Berry, the Beat poets and the Bible. Dylan is nothing if not wide-ranging in his inspirations.

The book is oddly structured, the autobiographical fandom of the first chapter and a recollection of an academic symposium he attended in Dylan's home town of Hibbing, Minnesota, soon giving way to a series of intermittently illuminating reflections on various subjects: selected albums, the memoir, the Nobel prize literary canonisation, as well as the accusations of plagiarism that have periodically dogged Dylan. One of the most revealing sections concerns Dylan's creative "stealing" from Ovid for his *Modern Times* album. "It eventually emerged," writes Thomas, "that more than 30 lines of Ovid's exile poems had been reappropriated and become an essential part of the fabric of the songs..." Thomas is surprisingly forgiving of such widespread borrowing, describing it as transformative and praising Dylan for bringing these "long-dead souls" back to life and "in effect bringing them into the modern times".

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**BOB DYLAN**

Apertura porta: 18:00

Arena Santa Giuliana Perugia

**Data: 7 Luglio 2023**

Ora: 21:30

Hermann Reehberger

Seltore: Gradinata

Gradinata Non Num.

1

Gradinata Non Numerata

Prezzo: EUR 45,00  
Piv: EUR 6,75  
Totale: EUR 51,75  
Incluse Presale Virgin  
TICKET MISTALE

Carta: AN122284  
Progressivo: 7770  
Data / ora: 17/07/23 18:30  
Cod. Ric. Im. Esp. In: EW000028  
Genere: 53

THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY WERE...  
**BOB DYLAN**

**"ROUGH AND ROWDY WAYS"**

WORLD WIDE TOUR  
2021-2024

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nessun rimborso.

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TITOLO ORIGINALE

Prezzo: EUR 45,00

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TICKET MISTALE

CF Org: 03086270544

CF TIC: 024748157

SE: 000404055300004

SE Genere: 00000000

Genere: 53

Carta: AN122284

Progressivo: 7770

Data / ora: 17/07/23 18:30

Cod. Ric. Im. Esp. In: EW000028

Genere: 53



For all that, there is a definite suggestion of intellectual snobbery in Thomas's choice of title: *Why Dylan Matters*. It is echoed, too, in his fellow classical scholar, Mary Beard's assertion on the book cover: "At last an expert classicist gets to grips with Bob Dylan." Both suggest, unconsciously or otherwise, that Dylan's songwriting only really matters if he can be shoehorned into the Homeric tradition and that academic canonisation is the ultimate vindication of Dylan's worth. It isn't. Nor, even, is the award of the Nobel prize in literature.

REVEALINGLY, THERE IS LITTLE HERE  
ABOUT HOW DYLAN DELIVERS HIS SONGS,  
THE EMOTIONAL THRUST OF THAT  
IMPERFECT VOICE

What is worth remembering here is that Dylan is a singer-songwriter who uses classical poetry in much the same way that he uses old blues and folk songs: as raw material for songs that only occasionally stand up to the kind of scholarly scrutiny that complex poems can withstand. Revealingly, there is little here about how Dylan delivers his songs, the emotional thrust of that imperfect, now faltering, voice and his often wilfully perverse delivery. One could argue that the majority of Dylan's songs evade academic interpretation, that they come to life when performed rather than as texts on the page.

In this context, *Why Dylan Matters*

misses the point, but there are nevertheless enough glimpses of illumination to make this a must for the converted. The rest of us can enjoy the songs without carrying the burden of how to measure or fully explain them, buoyed by Dylan's own admission in his Nobel prize acceptance speech: "Not once have I ever had the time to ask myself: 'Are my songs literature?'"

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### **A CLASSICS PROFESSOR EXPLAINS "WHY BOB DYLAN MATTERS"**

by Richard F. Thomas  
*Review by Jason Heller*

Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016 set off howls of indignation across the literary spectrum. Everyone from bloggers to bestsellers weighed in on why Dylan — while universally acknowledged to be one of the greatest songwriters of all time — had no place in the pantheon alongside Faulkner, Hemingway, and Beckett. Dylan's refusal to travel to Stockholm to accept the award in person only fanned the flames of resentment and bewilderment.

But plenty of defenders have stood up for Dylan's award — including Richard F. Thomas, a Harvard classics professor who teaches a popular class on Dylan that examines his legendary body of work, its context, and its cultural impact. Thomas'

new *Why Bob Dylan Matters* is based on that class.

Any book born this way has an uphill struggle not to seem overbearingly didactic, and at that, Thomas succeeds with brilliance and verve. Rather than coming across like a fleshed-out syllabus, the book joyously bounces from topic to topic, mixing anecdotes about Dylan's creative process, historical concerts, and wry press conferences with penetrating literary critique — and no shortage of Thomas' own personal recollections of bonding with Dylan's music. In one of these reminiscences, the author warmly discusses how his two great passions as a grad student in the early '70s — the epic poets of the Greco-Roman world and the heady, wordy folk-rock of Dylan — dovetailed into a kind of unified field theory linking Dylan to that ancient tradition.

Thomas rolls up his sleeves and tackles Dylan's oeuvre with glee. From his earliest classics to his self-reinvention with the album *Modern Times* in 2006, Dylan charted an erratic course, Thomas argues, that put him parallel to the gods of literature — including Ovid, whose work he places side-by-side with Dylan's lyrics. It's an eye-opening comparison that shows just how much Dylan stood, without apology, on the shoulders of giants. "Blowin' in the Wind," a song that's been dissected incessantly since its release in 1963, receives a

fresh inspection; Thomas focuses on its exquisite structure, while framing it in terms of the expectations and restrictions of songwriting during that era.

Thomas also devotes ample page-time to Dylan's one bona fide work of conventional literature, *Chronicles, Volume One*, the songwriter's 2004 memoir — a book he praises for its ability to render the Greenwich Village of the '60s as "a carnivalesque museum" while veering from hushed autobiography to superheroic myth.

As astute and bursting with enthusiasm as *Why Dylan Matters* is, it occasionally strikes a sour note. Thomas' observations about fellow Dylan fans who love to complain that he doesn't play enough hits in concert come across as hipper-than-thou, and the author can't resist inserting a dig against people who look at their cellphones at concerts. This modern phenomenon, he says, is especially tragic at a Dylan show, where apparently everyone in the audience should receive his music with nothing less than rapt and studious awe. It's only a stray observation on Thomas' part, but it reflects an area where *Why Dylan Matters* falls a little flat — its consideration of Dylan's status as a pop star and marketed icon who can be enjoyed on a strictly surface level, without having to parse the literary references in his songs. Anyway, for all Thomas knows, those millennials on cellphones at Dylan concerts may be looking up his lyrics and



*Bob Dylan And His Band*

- Bob Dylan - vocal, baby grand piano, harmonica*
- Donnie Herron - violin, electric mandolin,  
pedal steel, lap steel*
- Bob Britt - electric guitar, aco . guitar*
- Doug Lancio - electric guitar*
- Tony Garnier - bass*
- Jerry Pentecost - drums*

comparing them to Ovid. Those looking for an evenhanded and dispassionate exegesis of Dylan's lyrics should search elsewhere; instead, Thomas has delivered a highly informed, yet intimately personal celebration of one of our most important living writers.

An account of Dylan's Nobel adventure comprises the final chapter of the book, and it's a doozy. Starting with the 20-year campaign to get Dylan recognized by the Swedish Academy, Thomas tells a dramatic story of internecine political warfare on the international literary scene. In doing so, though, he tends to gloat and gloss over the resistance to Dylan's win. "But by the time of the ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, 2016, naysayers in the media and blogosphere had largely been silenced," he writes with a streak of smugness. It's entirely possible that the naysayers, a full two months after the announcement, had simply moved on to covering other things in the news cycle. Naturally, a book titled *Why Bob Dylan Matters* should be — and is — unswervingly partisan when it comes to its subject. Those looking for an evenhanded and dispassionate exegesis of Dylan's lyrics should search elsewhere; instead, Thomas has delivered a highly informed, yet intimately personal celebration of one of our most important living writers — not despite, but because of the medium in which he writes.