

SEE LIVE!!!

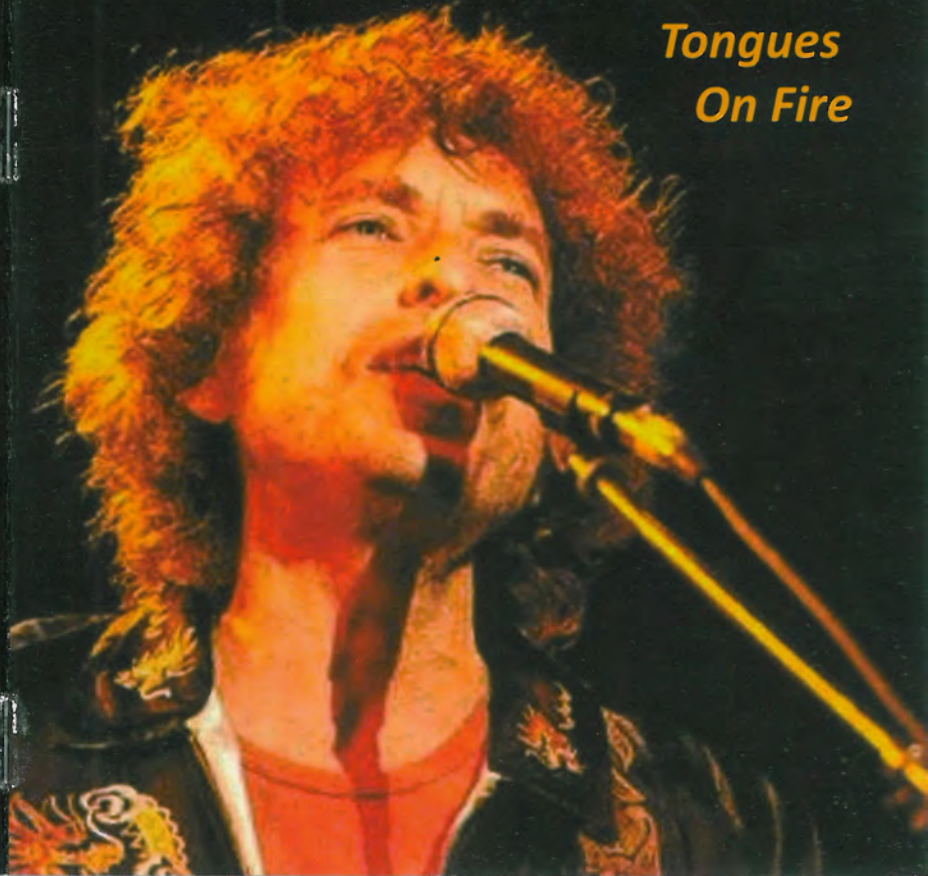
BOB DYLAN



TUE. OCT. 27
MEADOWLANDS ARENA

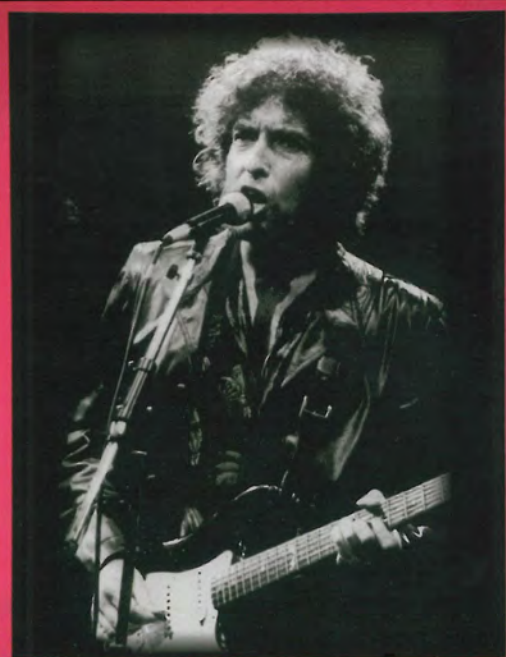
ON CBS RECORDS AND TAPES

*Tongues
On Fire*





Bob Dylan (vocal & guitar)
Fred Tackett (guitar)
Steve Ripley (guitar)
Al Kooper (keyboards)
Tim Drummond (bass)
Jim Keltner (drums)
Arthur Rosato (drums),
Clydie King, Regina Havis,
Madelyn Québec (background vocals)



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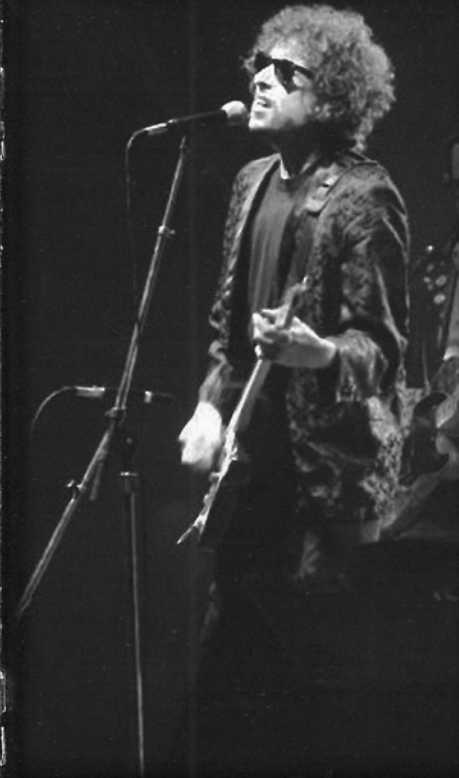
ON CBS RECORDS AND TAPES



In October [of 1981], Dylan launched his first full scale arena tour since 1978, of the East Coast, parts of the Midwest, and parts of the South with a few stops in Canada as well. There was no opening set of gospel songs by the backup singers, the shows were long, with at least 23 and sometimes 30 songs, and on keyboards onstage with Dylan for the first time since 1965 was Al Kooper.

[On the night of October 27] Dylan played the Meadowlands Sports Complex, just outside New York City at the then very new Brendan Byrne Arena . . . This show has been in my top five Dylan shows for almost 30 years. . .

One of the more magical moments was "Girl From the North Country," with Dylan on acoustic, backed by very quiet bass, drums and lead guitar, which would kick in subtly on the second verse. Dylan sang passionately, sweetly with more tenderness that I'd ever seen him sing in concert before or since. . . .



At many of the shows, Dylan would do a duet with Clydie King. . . . At the Meadowlands, Dylan introduced the song by saying, "The songwriter who wrote this song, is here tonight. There's a lot of famous people here tonight. I just want to tell you that you might be sitting next to somebody that's famous." Then Dylan and King, their voices perfectly melding launch into an astonishingly beautiful Jimmy Webb song, I'd never heard before (or since by anyone else) called "Let's Begin." While I'd heard and seen Dylan sing with many other people before and since, I don't think I've ever heard him sing quite as carefully as he did with Clydie King that night. At the end, Dylan said, "I hope we did it alright, Jimmy."

The next high point for me was midway through the show. Fred Tackett played a little intro lick, and then Dylan playing acoustic and singing immediately without any other instruments launched into a slow, almost spooky "The Times, They Are A-Changin'." Now Dylan had done this in the same arrangement at the two previous shows, but at the Meadowlands, it had a whole other edge. This is the reason why Bob Dylan's fans will go to more than one show on a tour, and collect hundreds if not thousands of recordings. You never know what song is gonna hit you and it can be different every night. On this night, the song was anything but the rallying cry of 1964. If anything it was a not quite look back at what didn't happen, and a warning cry for what was to come. After the fourth verse there was a harp solo, and until that time no instruments other than Dylan on guitar, then on the fifth verse, on the second line, a kick drum, followed by lead guitar, and then the bass and drums truly kicked in just for the harp solo.

Almost as if was a couple of decades before, Dylan kept his Martin strapped on and began the next song, "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" alone. The band stayed remarkably in the background, with the backup singers coming in on the chorus, occasionally accented by Kooper playing gospel chords on the keyboard, Dylan's acoustic rhythm driving the song. On the last verse he is truly singing like a poet, letting the words do the work for him. On that night, this version of this song, comes as close to true Gospel music, Staple Singers gospel as anything he did.

Following "Hard Rain," he moved to his then latest album with "Watered Down Love," introducing it by saying, "Well, what happens when hard rain falls, you get watered-down love," before a rocking "Masters Of War" with great jet bomber guitar by Steve Ripley. Then without accompaniment, Dylan sang the opening words to "Mr. Tambourine Man," at first just backed by his own rhythm guitar on a Fender Stratocaster until the band kicked in at the end of the first chorus. On the European tour, over the summer, Dylan had almost turned the melody inside out with incredible results. On the fall tour, he was singing a bit higher on his range, for much of the song he's really only singing two notes, but through some kind of magic makes it seem like a lot more. The band stays pretty much in the background with Kooper's organ dominating and playing what only can be called classic Al Kooper Dylan licks, allowing the whole performance to be Dylan's voice.



This was followed by "Solid Rock." Unlike the version on "Saved," as well as one on previous tours, the song has been slowed down to a simmering burn based around the backup singers, and Keltner's drums, accentuated by very funky guitar work by Tackett and Ripley. It maintains that pace for the whole song. The pace of the show is then picked up by "Dead Man, Dead Man," which featured a cool twin guitar solo.

Again starting out alone, Dylan was into "Just Like A Woman," the band again in the background, with Kooper providing the original organ fill at the end of the verse. . . .

There were still three more songs for the encore, a slow gospel tinged, "Blowin' In The Wind," a searing solo acoustic, "It's Alright Ma," and a half reggae half gospel, "Knockin' On Heaven's Door."

That night particularly . . . stayed with me for a long time . . . I've seen Dylan in concert more than a hundred times since that October night in 1981. I've seen some great shows, some good shows, some shows that were merely okay, and a couple of bad shows. All of the shows, even the bad ones had moments. But none featured as many songs, out of 28 performed, Dylan sang 27, and while some have come close, none have matched it for sheer consistent intensity of performance throughout.

-- Peter Stone Brown, "1981: The Last Really Great Dylan Tour?", Muddy Water Magazine





