

THE ROLLING STONE INTERVIEW:

DYLAN



ERIC HAYES



JIM MARSHALL

RECORDS

BY GREIL MARCUS

Bobby Darin had three hit records under his belt when he announced his goal in life: "I want to be a legend by the time I'm twenty-five." He didn't make it, but Bob Dylan did. Searching out the sources of every sort of American music—from the rock and roll childhood he shares with his fans to the depression balads our parents might have known, from the apocalypse of Robert Johnson to the city flash of Muddy Waters, from the old testament of the Carter Family to the ageless earth of Johnny Cash—Dylan found what he was looking for, and his impact on the Sixties has been devastating and magnificent. And that impact is perhaps as much a result of Dylan's personal stance as it is a result of his music. Hard to find, hard to find out about, Dylan held back from the usual nonsense and the honest curiosity that surrounds the star and created, perhaps to protect himself, perhaps for fun, a style of resistance, allegory, irony and humor that pervaded both his songs and his appearances in public. And more than ever, the fans could not bear to be without him and musicians could not afford to ignore him. The shifts in Dylan's own musical approach brought havoc to the "styles" of more groups and performers than would like to admit it. "If I didn't dig his stuff so much I'd have to hate him," said one; "In fact, maybe I do hate him anyway." Or as Dylan put it: "I get a friend who spends his life/Stabbing my picture with a bowie knife... I got a million friends."

And yet in eight years he has released only nine albums. The sparing manner in which Bob Dylan has presented both his own charismatic self and his special music to the public has brought about an amazing interest in and collection of rare and unreleased songs and performances. Some search these out because they want to listen, some because they want to hold them in their hands, some because they provide The Key. For whatever the reason, it becomes clear quite quickly that far more material remains unreleased than has ever appeared on Columbia LPs. The *Great White Wonder* records are only a taste of it—forgotten albums from the early Sixties, demos made for publishing companies, basement tapes, session rejects, live performances and songs deleted from LPs or withdrawn from the market—all this and more indicates that the recorded history of Dylan's career has been presented in a form that has been, perhaps, tailored for its impact on us. Ironically, it has been the impression made on us by the music we have been given that makes us want to hear the rest of it.

The "discography" that follows makes no claim to be complete; it's an effort to describe music that has been put down, and the descriptions draw only from the music itself, not from songbooks or word of mouth. It is a chronicle of what is available, formally and informally: what we've missed.

[HARMONICA RECORDS]

In last year's interview with *Sing Out*, Dylan mentioned that his first recordings were made with Big Joe Williams (in an older and more obscure interview Dylan talked about his early rock and roll days—touring with Bobby Vee, and, if you choose to believe all the stories, with Buddy Holly and Bo Diddley as well—and records he cut previous to his arrival in New York). The Williams recordings came about as a result of Bob's meeting with Victoria Spivey, a blues singer who was performing at Gerde's in the Village. Miss Spivey was recording Williams and allowed the young folksinger to perform with his idol. Two cuts remain in the vaults, but two have been released on *Three Kings and the Queen*, Spivey LP 1004 (Williams, Roosevelt Sykes, Lonnie Johnson, V. Spivey). Recorded in 1961, issued 1964. Dylan accompanies Williams on harp for "Wichita" and provides a deep blues back-up vocal for "Sitting On Top of the World."

"When Bobby first hit the Village he wasn't singing Woody Guthrie songs. That came later. That first time, he was



On the Isle of Wight, 1969

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into Harry Belafonte." So said an old New York folkie. Thus: *Midnight Special*, Harry Belafonte, RCA LSP 2449, issued May 1962, produced by Hugo Montenegro, with Bob Dylan, harmonica, on one cut, "Midnight Special."

Just before the release of his own first album, Dylan accompanied Carolyn Hester on her first and only Columbia LP. Gorgeous, but hopelessly without talent, Carolyn now heads up the Carolyn Hester Coalition, a "rock group." *Carolyn Hester*, Columbia CL 1796, Bob Dylan, harmonica.

Sometime in 1963 Dick Farina and Eric Von Schmidt (from "the green pastures of Harvard University...") found themselves in Europe and proceeded to cut an album, "singing, shouting and playing American ballads, work songs, and blues, with Ethan Singer and occasionally Blind Boy Grunt... Blind Boy Grunt showed up from Rome and nobody got much sleep..." The album is rather wretched, but for the record, Dylan plays harp on "Glory, Glory," "You Can't Always Tell," "Christmas Island," and "Cocaine." *Dick Farina and Eric Von Schmidt*, Folklore Records (English), F-LEUT/7 (77 Charing Cross Rd., London WC2. Available in the U.S. at Music Inn, 169 W. 4th St., NYC, \$1.98).

Finally, the old Elektra *Blues Project* set (not the group), EKS 7264, apparently includes Bob ("Bob Landy") on piano for "Downtown Blues." Now, with this out of the way, we can skip to 1969 for—

[JOHNNY CASH AND THE NASHVILLE SKYLINE RAG]

In 1969 The National Educational Television network aired a long documentary on Johnny Cash made by Granada Films. A fine show, it also included

a duet between Dylan and Cash on "One Too Many Mornings." The song was widely taped, and is in wide circulation (it was part of the same session that produced "Girl From the North Country"—released on *Nashville Skyline*—as well as "I Walk the Line," "Wanted Man," "Big River," "Careless Love," and "Understand Your Man," among others.) "One Too Many Mornings," seems to be one of the songs that has aged best for Bob—he was performing it with the Hawks in 1966 (see below) and of course recorded it on *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. The Dylan-Cash version is a bit of a burlesque, especially the final choruses, which go on and on and on. The film showed Dylan cracking up as he listened to the playback.

Dylan returned to Nashville in June of this year to tape his appearance on Cash's first TV show, and included the new "Living the Blues" in his set. As just about everyone who heard it has said, the tune catches the feel of Guy Mitchell's "Singing the Blues." This too was taped by many, and was included on the *Great White Wonder* discs. At the same time, Dylan cut a number of other songs, including "Take A Message To Mary," the old Everly Brothers number, and "Blue Moon," backed by Doug Kershaw on fiddle. One would hope, but doubt, that Bob's version would be patterned after the Marceles' hit—but Elvis' would be alright too. And now on to what this article is really about.

[THE MINNESOTA TAPES—OFF HIGHWAY 61]

Back in December, 1961, Bob Dylan recorded twenty-six songs in a hotel in Minneapolis. In this voluminous session, he put down a good bit of his repertoire—a young artist searching out his own material, perhaps for an audition tape to

be used to gain jobs or as preparation for a recording date. Having returned to Minnesota from New York, the tapes reflect things Dylan most likely learned from Dave Van Ronk, and others as well as songs that might have been picked up in any part of the country. There's a much greater range in this session than in the material that eventually surfaced as Dylan's first album. There is little sense of "packaging" or image; from the old Lord Buckley rap about Hezekiah Jones to the pounding gospel-rock of "Wade in the Water," from the clumsy, happy "Sally Gal" to the difficult "Man of Constant Sorrow," this is a young man attempting to understand American music, and beginning to succeed.

A brief run-down, with highlights: (1) "Candy Man." (2) "Baby Please Don't Go"—one of Dylan's best blues performances—a stinging, harsh vocal and rough, rhythmic guitar, with a bass drum pushing it on. Very similar to the brilliant hit version by Them. This number would have shaken up a lot of people had it been included on Dylan's first LP. (3) "Hard Times in New York"—Dylan finds the big city unpleasant and polluted, yearns for wide open spaces, etc. (4) "Stealin'"—Bob's version of the old blues theme of infidelity; rough, clumsy, and a lot of fun.

(5) "Poor Lazarus"—the depth of talent that made Dylan a young sensation begins to come clear on this number. It is simply not that easy for a twenty-year-old to sing a song about death and treachery and carry it off, but Dylan does it. He could play the roles of fathers and sons as he sang about them, and if he could not yet sing with the presence of Robert Johnson, he was beginning to understand what it might mean to do so. (6) "Ain't Got No Home"—a crude version of the Guthrie song. (7) "It's Hard To Be Blind"—a reworking of the old "It's Hard To Be Poor." "I wrote my own words to it," says Bob. (8) "Dink's Song"—"I learned it from a lady named Dink. I don't know who wrote it." The number has an infectious rhythm; it would make a great rock and roll performance. The drama of Dylan's soft guitar almost makes the listener feel strings have been added—there is that much projection in the take. It's a simple faretheewell, but unspeakably lovely, and a hint of what was to come with "Corinna, Corinna" and "Boots of Spanish Leather." (9) "Man of Constant Sorrow"—another brilliant version of the song included on Dylan's first LP. (10) "East Orange, NJ"—a long shaggy dog story about the perils of being a musician in a hick town. Dylan would never have made it as a stand-up comedian, though. (11) "Only Wise"—a lovely, ancient song of lost love and death. (12) "Wade in the Water"—an up-tempo charged. Today they'd call it "heavy." Dylan's bottlenecking gives the take its guts.

(13) "I Was Young When I Left Home"—"I sorta made it up on a train," Bob says. This is the most brilliant song of the session; an aching, desperate marriage of several traditional songs, and modern themes: "Five Hundred Miles," Bobby Bare's "Detroit City," and others. "It's so blue," said a friend when he heard it. One has the image of a single, solitary young man floating in his mind from station to station, riding whatever train might pass through with the old hope of someday finding someone there to meet him when he gets off at the end of the line. "I was young when I left home... an' I been a ramblin' round... and I never wrote a letter to my home." It has a maturity youth deserves to be spared. (14) "Get Lonesome Sleeping By Yourself"—a mean blues, with dirty, beautifully restrained harp and percussion. (15) "Baby Let Me Follow You Down"—a long, wildly exuberant take of the number that illuminated the first album. (16) "Sally Gal"—"I'm gonna get you, Sally Gal!" Why not? (17) "Gospel Plow"—again, on the first LP. (18) "Long John"—one of those superthentic

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They say Bob Dylan is the most secretive and elusive person in the entire rock and roll substructure, but after doing this interview, I think it would be closer to the point to say that Dylan, like John Wesley Harding, was "never known to make a foolish move."

The preparations for the interview illustrates this well. About 18 months ago, I first started writing Bob letters asking for an interview, suggesting the conditions and questions and reasons for it. Then, a little over a year ago, the night before I left New York, a message came from the hotel operator that a "Mr. Dillon" had called.

Two months later, I met Bob for the first time at another hotel in New York: ...he casually strolled in wearing a sheep-

skin outfit, leather boots, very well put together but not too tall, y'understand. It was 10 A.M. in the morning, and I rolled out of bed stark naked—sleep that way, y'understand—and we talked for half an hour about doing an interview, what it was for, why it was necessary. Bob was feeling out the situation, making sure it would be cool.

That meeting was in the late fall of 1968. It took eight months—until the end of June this year—to finally get the interview. The meantime was covered with a lot of phone calls, near misses in New York City, Bob's trips to California which didn't take place and a lot of waiting and waiting for that right time when we were both ready for the show.

The interview took place on a Thursday afternoon in New York City at my hotel, right around the corner from the funeral home where Judy Garland was

being inspected by ten thousand people, who formed lines around several city blocks. We were removed from all that activity, but somehow it seemed appropriate enough that Judy Garland's funeral coincided with the interview.

Bob was very cautious in everything he said, and took a long time between questions to phrase exactly what he wanted to say, nothing more and sometimes a little less. When I wasn't really satisfied with his answers, I asked the questions another way, later. But Bob was hip.

Rather than edit the interview into tight chunks and long answers, I asked Sheryl to transcribe the tapes with all the pauses, asides and laughs left in. So, much of the time, it's not what is said, but how it is said, and I think you will dig it more just as it went down.

To bring us up to date after all that, August through September was spent try-

ing to get Bob together with Bob to get some new photographs of him, in a natural, non-performance situation. But it proved fruitless. Perhaps if we had had another six months to work on getting the photographs, but Bob was simply not to be rushed or pushed into something he really didn't feel like doing at the time. ("I'll have Bob meet you in New York tomorrow." "Well, tomorrow I might be in Tucson, Arizona." "Baron will fly to Tucson," etc.)

The photographs we have used are from rehearsals for the Johnny Cash show and from the Isle of Wight, ones you probably have not seen yet, and some photos of Bob from a long time ago. Bob promised that we would get together soon to take some photos, and if we do, you'll see them as soon as we get them. But don't hold your breath.

Meantime, here's the interview.

When do you think you're gonna go on the road?

November... possibly December.

What kind of dates do you think you'll play—concerts? Big stadiums or small concert halls?

I'll play medium-sized halls.

What thoughts do you have on the kind of back-up you're going to use?

Well, we'll keep it real simple, you know... drums... bass... second guitar... organ... piano. Possibly some horns. Maybe some background voices.

Girls? Like the Raylettes?

We could use some girls.

Do you have any particular musicians in mind at this time?

To go out on the road? Well, I always have some in mind. I'd like to know a little bit more about what I'm gonna do. You see, when I discover what I'm gonna do, then I can figure out what kind of sound I want.

I'd probably use... I'd want the best band around, you know?

Are you going to use studio musicians or use some already existing band?

I don't know... you see, it involves putting other people on the bill, full-time. I'd only probably use the Band again... if I went around.

And they'd do the first half of the show?

... Sure... sure...

Are you thinking of bringing any other artists with you?

Well, every so often we do think about that. (laughter) We certainly do. I was thinking about maybe introducing Marvin Rainwater or Slim Whitman to "my audience."

Have you been in touch with either of them?

No... no.

What did you think when you saw yourself on the Cash show?

(Laughs) Oh, I'd never see that... I can't stand to see myself on television. No.

Did you dig doing it?

I dig doing it, yeah. Well, you know, television isn't like anything else... it's also like the movie business, you know, where they call you and then you just sit around. So by the time you finally do something, you have to do it three or four times, and usually all the spirit's gone.

You didn't watch it on TV?

(Laughs) I did watch it on TV... just because I wanted to see Johnny. I didn't realize they slowed Doug Kershaw down, too. They slowed his song down to... his song was like this... (taps out steady beat)... and they slowed him down to... (taps slow rhythm)... you know?

Just by slowing down the tape?

They just slowed him down. I don't know how, I don't know what happened. I think the band slowed him down or something, but boy he was slowed down. During rehearsals and just sitting around, he played these songs... the way we was going at it, maybe 3/4 time, and they slowed him down to about 2/3 time, you know?

Did you have any difficulty working with the TV people doing something like that?

O no, no, they're wonderful people... they really are. It was by far the most enjoyable television program I've ever done. I don't do television just because you get yourself in such a mess... so I don't do it.

You told me once that you were going to do a TV special?

That's what I'm talking about.

In Hollywood?

No, I'm talking about CBS.

In New York?

Well, we don't know that yet. They don't have in mind exactly what they

would like. They kind of leave it wide open, so we're trying to close the gap now.

What do you have in mind for it?

Oh, I just have some free-form type thing in mind. A lot of music.

Presenting other artists?

Sure... I don't mind. I don't know who, but...

Why haven't you worked in so long?

Well, uh... I do work.

I mean on the road.

On the road... I don't know, working on the road... Well, Jann, I'll tell ya—I was on the road for almost five years. It wore me down. I was on drugs, a lot of things. A lot of things just to keep going, you know? And I don't want to live that way anymore. And uh... I'm just waiting for a better time—you know what I mean?

What would you do that would make the tour that you're thinking about doing different from the ones you did do?

Well, I'd like to slow down the pace a little. The one I did do... the next show's gonna be a lot different from the last show. The last show, during the first half, of which there was about an hour, I only did maybe six songs. My songs were long, long songs. But that's why I had to start dealing with a lot of different methods of keeping myself awake, alert... because I had to remember all the words to those songs. Now I've got a whole bag of new songs. I've written 'em for the road, you know. So I'll be doing all these songs on the road. They're gonna sound a lot better than they do on record.

My songs always sound a lot better in person than they do on the record.

Why?

Well, I don't know why. They just do.

On Nashville Skyline—who does the arrangements? The studio musicians, or...?

Boy, I wish you could've come along the last time we made an album. You'd probably enjoyed it... 'cause you see right there, you know how it's done. We just take a song; I play it and everyone else just sort of fills in behind it. No sooner you got that done, and at the same time you're doing that, there's someone in the control booth who's turning all those dials to where the proper sound is coming in... and then it's done. Just like that.

Just out of rehearsing it? It'll be a take?

Well, maybe we'll take about two times.

Were there any songs on Nashville Skyline that took longer to take?

I don't know... I don't think so. There's a movie out now, called *Midnight Cowboy*. You know the song on the album, "Lay, Lady, Lay"? Well, I wrote that song for that movie. These producers, they wanted some music for their movie. This was last summer. And this fellow there asked me, you know, if I could do some music for their movie. So I came up with that song. By the time I came up with it, though it was too late (Laughs) it's the same old story all the time. It's just too late... so I kept the song and recorded it.



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There's something going on with Easy Rider—you wrote the lyrics for a song that Roger McGuinn wrote the music for, or something? Something... writing a song for Easy Rider, the Peter Fonda film? Were you involved in that at all?

They used some of my music in it. They used a song of the Band's, too. They also used Steppenwolf music. I don't know anything more about it than that.

Do you know which song of yours they used?

"It's Alright, Ma"—but they had Roger McGuinn singing it.

Have you been approached to write music for any other movies?

Uh-hum.

Considering any of them?

Uh-unh.

Why? Scripts?

Ummm... I don't know. I just can't seem to keep my mind on it. I can't keep my mind on the movie. I had a script awhile ago, that was called *Zachariah and the Seven Cowboys*. (Laughs) That was some script. Every line in it was taken out of the Bible. And just thrown together. Then there was another one, called *The Impossible Toy*. Have you seen that? (laughs) Yeah. Let's see, what else? Ummm... no, I'm not planning on doing any music for movies.

When are you going to do another record?

You mean when am I going to put out an album?

Have you done another record?

No... not exactly. I was going to try and have another one out by the fall.

Is it done in Nashville again?

Well, we... I think so... I mean it's... seems to be as good a place as any.

What first got you involved with or attracted you to the musicians at the Columbia studios?

Nashville? Well we always used them since *Blonde on Blonde*. Well, we didn't use Pete on *Blonde on Blonde*.

What was Joe South like to work with?

Joe South? Well he was quiet. He didn't say too much. I always did like him though.

Do you like his record?

I love his records.

That album, Introspect?

Um-hum. I always enjoyed his guitar-playing. Ever since I heard him.

Does he have any solos on Blonde on Blonde?

Um-hum. Yes he does. He has a... he's playing a high guitar lick on... well, if you named me the songs, I could tell you which one it was, but it's catchin' my mind at the moment. He was playing... he played a big, I believe it was a Gretsch, guitar—one of those Chet Atkins models. That's the guitar he played it on.

"Absolutely Sweet Marie"?

Yeah, it could've been that one. Or "Just Like a Woman"... one of those. Boy he just... he played so pretty.

On Nashville Skyline, do you have any song on that that you particularly dig? Above the others.

Uh... "Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You." I like "Tell Me That It Isn't True," although it came out completely different than I'd written it. It came out real slow and mellow. I had it written as sort of a jerky, kind of polka-type thing. I wrote it in F. I wrote a lot of songs on this new album in F. That's what gives it kind of a new sound. They're all in F... not all of them, but quite a few. There's not many on that album that aren't in F. So you see

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DYLAN

I had those chords . . . which gives it a certain sound. I try to be a little different on every album.

I'm sure you read the reviews of Nashville Skyline. Everybody remarks on the change of your singing style . . .

Well Jann, I'll tell you something. There's not too much of a change in my singing style, but I'll tell you something which is true . . . I stopped smoking. When I stopped smoking, my voice changed . . . so drastically, I couldn't believe it myself. That's true. I tell you, you stop smoking those cigarettes (laughter) . . . and you'll be able to sing like Caruso.

How many songs did you go into Nashville Skyline with?

I went in with uhh . . . the first time I went into the studio I had, I think, four songs. I pulled that instrumental one out . . . I needed some songs with an instrumental . . . then Johnny came in and did a song with me. Then I wrote one in the motel . . . then pretty soon the whole album started fillin' in together, and we had an album. I mean, we didn't go down with that in mind. That's why I wish you were there . . . you could've really seen it happen. It just manipulated out of nothing.

How many songs did you do with Johnny?

Well, we did quite a few. We just sat down and started doing some songs . . . but you know how those things are. You get into a room with someone, you start playing and singing, and you sort of forget after a while what you're there for. (laughs)

You must have a lotta songs with him on tape . . . are you thinking of putting out a collection of them?

Well I'm not, no. But you usually have to leave those things in the hands of the producers.

Is there one of those?

A tape?

No, an album.

No . . . not that I know of. If there was an album, I believe that we would both have to go back into the studio and record some more songs.

There's not enough there already . . . or it's just not good enough?

Well, it's uhh . . . what it comes down to is a choice of material. If they wanted an album—a joint album—they could probably get a lot more material with a broader range on it. If we went there with actually certain songs in mind to do . . . see, that didn't happen last time.

How did you make the change . . . or why did you make the change, of producers, from Tom Wilson to Bob Johnston?

Well, I can't remember, Jann. I can't remember . . . all I know is that I was out recording one day, and Tom had always been there—I had no reason to think he wasn't going to be there—and I looked up one day and Bob was there. (laughs)

There's been some articles on Wilson and he says that he's the one that gave you the rock and roll sound . . . and started you doing rock and roll. Is that true?

Did he say that? Well, if he said it . . . (laughs) more power to him. (laughs) He did to a certain extent. That is true. He did. He had a sound in mind.

Have you ever thought of doing an album . . . a very arranged, very orchestrated album, you know, with chicks and . . . ?

Gee, I've thought of it . . . I think about it once in a while. Yeah.

You think you might do one?
I do whatever comes naturally. I'd like to do an album like that. You mean using my own material and stuff.

Yeah, using your own material but with vocal background and . . .

I'd like to do it. Who wouldn't?

When did you make the change from John Hammond . . . or what caused the change from John Hammond?

John Hammond. He signed me in 1960. He signed me to Columbia Records. I think he produced my first album. I think he produced my second one, too.

And Tom Wilson was also working at Columbia at the time?

He was . . . you know, I don't recall how that happened . . . or why that switch took place. I remember at one time I was about to record for Don Law. You know Don Law? I was about

I met Don Law in New York, in 1962 . . . and again recently, last year when I did the *John Wesley Harding* album. I met him down in the studio. He came in . . . he's a great producer. He produced many of the earlier records for Columbia and also for labels which they had before—Okeh and stuff like that. I believe he did the Robert Johnson records.

What did you do in the year between Blonde on Blonde and John Wesley Harding?

Well I was on tour part of that time . . . Australia, Sweden . . . an overseas tour. Then I came back . . . and in the spring of that year, I was scheduled to go out—it was one month off, I had a one-month vacation—I was gonna go back on the road again in July. *Blonde on Blonde* was up on the charts at this time. At that time I had a dreadful motorcycle accident . . . which put me away for awhile . . . and I still didn't sense the importance of that accident till at least a year after that. I realized that it was a real accident. I mean I thought that I was just gonna get up and go back to doing what I was doing before . . . but I couldn't do it anymore.

What did I do during that year? I helped work on a film . . . which was supposed to be aired on Stage 67, a television show which isn't on anymore . . . I don't think it was on for very long.

What change did the motorcycle accident make?

What change? Well, it . . . it limited me. It's hard to speak about the change, you know? It's not the type of change that one can put into words . . . besides the physical change. I had a busted vertebrae; neck vertebrae. And there's really not much to talk about. I don't want to talk about it.

Laying low for a year . . . you must have had time to think. That was the ABC-TV show? What happened to the tapes of that? How come that never got shown?

Well, I could make an attempt to answer that, but . . . (laughs) . . . I think my manager could probably answer it a lot better.

I don't think he answers too many questions.

Doesn't he? He doesn't answer questions? Well he's a nice guy. He'll usually talk to you if you show some enthusiasm for what you're talking about.

So what happened to the tapes?

You mean that film? As far as I know, it will be sold . . . or a deal will be made, for its sale. That's what I'm told. But you see, Jann, I don't hold these movie people in too high a position. You know this movie, *Don't Look Back*? Well, that splashed my face all

over the world, that movie *Don't Look Back*. I didn't get a penny from that movie, you know . . . so when people say why don't you go out and work and why don't you do this and why don't you do that, people don't know half of what a lot of these producers and people, lawyers . . . they don't know the half of those stories. I'm an easy-going kind of fellow, you know . . . I'm forgive and forget. I like to think that way. But I'm a little shy of these people. I'm not interested in finding out anymore about any film.

Did you like Don't Look Back?
I'd like it a lot more if I got paid for it. (laughter)

There was supposed to be another film that Pennebaker shot—I don't know when or where—maybe it was the ABC film . . .

That was it. Sure it was. That's the one you're talking about.

Is it a good one?

Well, we cut it fast on the eye. It's fast on the eye. I'd have to let you see it for yourself, to think about if it's a good one. I don't know if it's a good one. For me, it's too fast for the eye . . . but there are quite a few people who say it's really good. Johnny Cash is in it. John Lennon's in it. The Band's in it. Who else . . . a lot of different people from the European capitals of the world are in it.

Princes and princesses? (laughs)

Well not princesses. (laughs) but presidents (laughs) and people like that.

What is the nature of your acquaintance with John Lennon?

Oh, I always love to see John. Always. He's a wonderful fellow . . . and I always like to see him.

He said that the first time that you met, in New York, after one of the concerts or something like that, it was a very uptight situation.

It probably was, yes. Like, you know how it used to be for them. They couldn't go out of their room. They used to tell me you could hardly get in to see them. There used to be people surrounding them, not only in the streets, but in the corridors in the hotel. I should say it was uptight.

How often have you seen them subsequently?

Well, I haven't seen them too much recently.

What do you think of the bed-ins for Peace? Him and Yoko.

Well, you know . . . everybody's doing what they can do. I don't mind what he does, really . . . I always like to see him.

Do you read the current critics? The music critics, so-called "rock and roll writers"?

Well I try to keep up. I try to keep up-to-date . . . I realize I don't do a very good job in keeping up to date, but I try to. I don't know half the groups that are playing around now. I don't know half of what I should.

Are there any that you've seen that you dig?

Well I haven't seen any.

I mean like Traffic, and . . .

See, I never saw Traffic . . . I never even saw Cream. I feel bad about those things, but what can I do?

See them? (laughs)

Well, I can't now, I'm going to see this new group, called Blind Faith. I'm going to make it my duty to go see them . . . 'cause they'll probably be gone (laughter) in another year or so. So I'd better get up there quick and see them.

Do you like Stevie Winwood singing?

Oh sure, sure . . . Stevie Winwood, he came to see us in Manchester. Last time we were in Manchester . . . that was 1966. Or was it Birmingham? His brother—he's got a brother named Muff—Muff took us all out to see a haunted house, outside of Manchester, or Birmingham, one of those two. Or was it Newcastle? Something like that. We went out to see a haunted house, where a man and his dog was to have burned up in the 13th century. Boy, that place was spooky. That's the last time I saw Stevie Winwood.

Have you been listening to his . . . have you heard the Traffic records? The stuff that he's been doing lately?

I heard them doing "Gimmie Some Lovin'"; I love that. I didn't get all the names . . . after that. I seem to recall hearing a Traffic record. I know I've heard the Traffic . . . the group. Traffic, on the radio. I've heard that.

Have you heard the San Francisco bands?

Jefferson Airplane? Quicksilver Messenger Service. Yeah, I've heard them. The Grateful Dead.

Do you like them?

Yeah, sure do.

Is there anything happening on the current rock and roll scene that strikes you as good?

Yeah, I heard a record by Johnny Thunder. It's called "I'm Alive." Never heard it either, huh? Well, I can't believe it. Everyone I've talked to, I've asked them if they've heard that record.

Is it on the radio right now?

I don't know. I heard it on the radio a month ago, two months ago . . . three months ago. It was one of the most powerful records I've ever heard. It's called "I'm Alive." By Johnny Thunder. Well, it was that sentiment, truly expressed. That's the most I can say . . . if you heard the record, you'd know what I mean. But that's about all . . .

Do you like the stuff that Ray Stevens is doing?

Oh, I've always liked Ray Stevens. Sure.

Have you had occasion to go to Memphis, you know, when you're down there . . . or Muscle Shoals or Pensacola, any of the great musical centers of the South?

No, I've never been in any of the recording studios there.

Have you ever met Ray Stevens?

Uh, I've been in the same building with Ray Stevens. He was behind another door . . . but I've never met him; I've never shook his hand. No.

I don't want to get nosy or get into your personal life . . . but there was a series recently in the Village Voice, about your growing up, living, and going to high school. Did you read that series?

Yeah I did. At least, I read some of it.

Was it accurate?

Well, it was accurate as far as this fellow who was writing it . . . this fellow . . . I wouldn't have read it if I thought . . . he was using me to write his story. So I feel a little unusual in this case, 'cause I can see through this writer's aims. But as far as liking it or disliking it, I didn't do neither of those things. I mean it's just publicity from where I am. So if they want to spend six or seven issues writing about me (laughs) . . . as long as they get it right, you know, as long as they get it in there, I can't complain.

You must have some feelings about picking up a newspaper that has a hundred thousand circulation and seeing that some guy's gone and talked to your parents and your cousins, and uncles . . .

Well, the one thing I did . . . I don't like the way this writer talked about my father who has passed away. I didn't dig him talking about my father and using his name. Now that's the only thing about the article I didn't dig. But that boy has got some lessons to learn.

What did he say?

That don't matter what he said. He didn't have no right to speak about my father, who has passed away. If he wants to do a story on me, that's fine. I don't care what he wants to say about me. But to uhh . . . I got the feeling that he was taking advantage of some good people that I used to know and he was making fun of a lot of things. I got the feeling he was making fun of quite a few things . . . this fellow, Toby. You know what I mean, Jann? Soooo . . . we'll just let that stand as it is . . . for now.

I've gone through all the collected articles that have appeared, all the early ones and Columbia records' biographies, that's got the story about running away from home at 11 and 12 and 13-one-half . . . why did you put out that story?

I didn't put out any of those stories!

Well, it's the standard Bob Dylan biography . . .

Well, you know how it is, Jann . . . If you're sittin' in a room, and you have to

—Continued



JIM MARSHALL



DYLAN

have something done... I remember once, I was playing at Town Hall, and the producer of it came over with that biography... you know, I'm a songwriter, I'm not a biography writer, and I need a little help with these things.

So if I'm sitting in a room with some people, and I say "Come on now, I need some help; gimme a biography," so there might be three or four people there and out of those three or four people maybe they'll come up with something, come up with a biography. So we put it down, it reads well, and the producer of the concert is satisfied. In fact, he even gets a kick out of it. You dig what I mean?

But in actuality, this thing wasn't written for hundreds of thousands of people... it was just a little game for whoever was going in there and getting a ticket, you know, they get one of these things too. That's just show business. So you do that, and pretty soon you've got a million people who get it on the side. You know? They start thinkin' that it's written all for them. And it's not written for them—it was written for someone who bought the ticket to the concert. You got all these other people taking it too seriously. Do you know what I mean? So a lot of things have been blown out of proportion.

At the time when all your records were out, and you were working and everybody was writing stories about you, you let that become your story... you sort of covered up your parents, and your old friends... you sort of kept people away from them...

Did I? Well, that was the impression it gave... Jann, you know, my best friends... you're talking about old friends, and best friends... if you want to go by those standards, I haven't seen my best friends for over 15 years. You know what I mean?

I'm not in the business of covering anything up. If I was from New Jersey, I could make an effort to show people my old neighborhood. If I was from Baltimore, same thing. Well, I'm from the Midwest. Boy, that's two different worlds.

This whole East Coast... there are a few similarities between the East Coast and the Midwest and, of course, the people are similar, but it's a big jump. So, I came out of the Midwest, but I'm not interested in leading anybody back there. That's not my game.

Why do you choose to live in the East? Well, because we're nearer New York now. We don't choose anything... we just go with the wind. That's it.

Most people who become successful in records, especially artists, start wondering at some point about whether they're becoming businessmen, taking care of contracts, and making money... did you ever get that?

Yeah, I certainly did. I'd love to become a businessman. (laughs). Love it. Love it.

What do you think of the music business?

I'd love to become a businessman in the music business.

Doing what? Well, doing that same thing that other businessmen are doing... talking about recording, publishing, producing...

Have you ever wanted to produce an album for some other artist?

I have.

Which one? Uhh... it's been a long time. I can't even remember which one. I saw somebody once, it was down in the Village. Anyway...

Are there any artists around today that you'd like to produce?

Well, there was some talk about producing Burt Lancaster doing the hymn "I Saw St. Augustine"...

Well, the movie business being what it is... going back to reviews that you've gotten for various albums; everybody has a lot of strange interpretations and decisions... have you ever read any criticisms about that that you liked or thought was accurate—or possibly got close to what you were trying to do?

Mmmmm... I can't say that I have. I don't recall. Like I say, Jann, I don't keep up with it as much as I should.

At the time when Highway 61 and Bringing It All Back Home were coming out... do you remember anything from them?

Do you? Yeah, the liner notes.

What did you like about those liner notes?

I think they were very groovy. They explained what was going on in the album, and how the album came to be recorded, and how it all came to be said. Why didn't you publish Tarantula?

Why? Well... it's a long story. It begins with when I suddenly began to sell quite a few records, and a certain amount of publicity began to be carried in all the major news magazines about this "rising young star." Well, this industry being what it is, book companies began sending me contracts, because I was doing interviews before and after concerts, and reporters would say things like "What else do you write?" And I would say, "Well, I don't write much of anything else." And they would say, "Oh, come on. You must write other things. Tell us something else. Do you write books?" And I'd say, "Sure, I write books."

After the publishers saw that I wrote books, they began to send me contracts... Doubleday, Macmillan, Hill and Range (laughter)... we took the biggest one, and then owed them a book. You follow me?

But there was no book. We just took the biggest contract. Why? I don't know. Why I did, I don't know. Why I was told to do it, I don't know. Anyway, I owed them a book.

So I sat down, and said "Wow, I've done many things before, it's not so hard to write a book." So I sat down and wrote them a book in the hotel rooms and different places, plus I got a lot of other papers laying around that other people had written, so I threw it all together in a week and sent it to them.

Well, it wasn't long after that when I got it back to proofread it. I got it back and I said "My gosh, did I write this? I'm not gonna have this out." Do you know what I mean? "I'm not gonna put this out. The folks back home just aren't going to understand this at all." I said, "Well, I have to do some corrections on this," I told them, and set about correcting it. I told them I was improving it.

Boy, they were hungry for this book. They didn't care what it was. They just wanted... people up there were saying "Boy, that's the second James Joyce," and "Jack Kerouac again" and they were saying "Homer revisited"... and they were all just talking through their heads.

They just wanted to sell books, that's all they wanted to do, it wasn't about anything... and I knew that—I figured they had to know that, they were in the business of it. I knew that, and I was just nobody. If I knew it, where were they at? They were just playing with me. My book.

So I wrote a new book. I figured I was satisfied with it and I sent that in. Wow, they looked at that and said "Well, that's another book." And I said, "Well, but it's better." And they said, "Okay, we'll print this." So they printed that up and sent that back to proofread it. So I proofread it—I just looked at the first paragraph—and knew I just couldn't let that stand. So I took the whole thing with me on tour. I was going to rewrite it all. Carried a typewriter around... around the world. Trying to meet this deadline which they'd given me to put this book out. They just backed me into a corner. A lot of invisible people. So finally, I had a deadline on it, and

was working on it, before my motorcycle accident. And I was studying all kinds of different prints and how I wanted them to print the book, by this time, I also was studying at lot of other poets at this time... I had books which I figured could lead me somewhere... and I was using a little bit from everything.

But still, it wasn't any book; it was just to satisfy the publishers who wanted to print something that we had a contract for. Follow me? So eventually, I had my motorcycle accident and that just got me out of the whole thing, 'cause I didn't care anymore. As it stands now, Jann, I could write a book. But I'm gonna write it first, and then give it to them. You know what I mean?

Do you any particular subject in mind, or plan, for a book?

Do you? For yours or mine? (laughs) For any of them.

What writers today do you dig? Like who would you read if you were writing a book? Mailer?

All of them. There's something to be learned from them all.

What about the poets? You once said something about Smokey Robinson...

I didn't mean Smokey Robinson, I meant Arthur Rimbaud. I don't know how I could've gotten Smokey Robinson mixed up with Arthur Rimbaud. (laughter) But I did.

Do you see Alan Ginsberg much? Not at all. Not at all.

Do you think he had any influence on your songwriting at all?

I think he did at a certain period. That period of... "Desolation Row," that kind of New York type period, when all the songs were just "city songs." His poetry is city poetry. Sounds like the city.

Before, you were talking about touring and using drugs. During that period of songs like "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Baby Blue," which a lot of writers have connected to the drug experience, not in the sense of them being "psychedelic music," or drug songs, but having come out of the drug experience.

How so? In terms of perceptions. A level of perceptions... awareness of the songs... Awareness of the minute. You mean that?

An awareness of the mind. I would say so.

Did taking drugs influence the songs? No, not the writing of them, but it did keep me up there to pump 'em out.

Why did you leave the city and city songs for the country and country songs? The country songs?

The songs... you were talking about "Highway 61" being a song of the city, and songs of New York City... What was on that album? Highway 61? "Desolation Row," "Queen Jane"...

Well, it was also what the audiences wanted to hear, too... don't forget that. When you play every night in front of an audience, you know what they want to hear. It's easier to write songs then. You know what I'm talking about?

Who do you think your current audience is? Who do you think you're selling records to?

records to? What kind of people? Well, I don't know. When I go out on the road, I'll find out, won't I?

Did you get any indication of that from who showed up in the audience in Nashville?

No, they were just people. Just people. I find every audience more or less the same, although you can have a certain attachment or disattachment for one because it may be bigger or smaller. But... people are just people.

Many people—writers, college students, college writers—all felt tremendously affected by your music and what you're saying in the lyrics.

Did they? Sure. They felt it had a particular relevance to their lives... I mean, you must be aware of the way that people come on to you.

Not entirely. Why don't you explain to me.

I guess if you reduce it to its simplest terms, the expectation of your audience—the portion of your audience that I'm familiar with—feels that you have the answer.

What answer? Like from the film, Don't Look Back—people asking you "Why? What is it? Where is it?" People are tremendously hung-up on what you write and what you say, tremendously hung-up. Do you react to that at all? Do you feel responsible to those people?

I don't want to make anybody worry about it... but boy, if I could ease someone's mind, I'd be the first one to do it. I want to lighten every load. Straighten out every burden. I don't want anybody to be hung-up... (laughs) especially over me, or anything I do. That's not the point at all.

Let me put it another way... what I'm getting at is that you're an extremely important figure in music and an extremely important figure in the experience of growing up today. Whether you put yourself in that position or not, you're in that position. And you must have thought about it... and I'm curious to know what you think about that...

What would I think about it? What can I do?

You wonder if you're really that person.

What person? A great "youth leader"...

If I thought I was that person, wouldn't I be out there doing it? Wouldn't I be, if I thought I was meant to do that, wouldn't I be doing it? I don't have to hold back. This Maharishi, he thinks that—right? He's out there doing it. If I thought that, I'd be out there doing it. Don't you... you agree, right? So obviously, I don't think that.

What do you feel about unwillingly occupying that position?

I can see that position filled by someone else... not by... the position you're speaking of... I play music, man. I write songs. I have a certain balance about things, and I believe there should be an order to everything. Underneath it all. I believe, also, that there are people trained for this job that you're talking about—"youth leader" type of thing, you know? I mean, there must be people trained to do this type of work. And I'm just one person, doing what I do. Trying to get along... staying out of people's hair, that's all.

You've been also a tremendous influence on a lot of musicians and writers, they're very obviously affected by your style, the way you do things...

Who? Well, somebody like Phil Ochs, for example... a lot of people like that.

Phil Ochs, uh... was around the same time I was, I remember

when he came to town. He had his... he was doing his "Stand Tall Billy Sol" type songs. I mean, he had it then. I think he made it, there being a certain amount of momentum—he pushed—from being on the scene. But he did bring his own thing in, when he same in. He didn't—as some people—come in as a dishwasher, to dig some sounds and suddenly put down the broom, and pick up the guitar. You know what I mean?

I'm thinking also of other singers, of people who were singing before and playing the guitar.

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JIM MARSHALL

DYLAN

Do you see any influence in the Motown? All those things that the Motown records are doing now? Like "Runaway Child" and those kind of things. I mean, Motown wasn't doing those kind of records a few years ago, were they? What do you think they're doing, Jann? Are they really sincere and all that kind of thing?

I think they're sincere about making good records, and they're going to sell a lot of them. I dig that. Do you like the Motown records?

Well, yeah... I like them...

Do you like the ones today better than the ones that they were doing before?

Oh I have always liked the Motown records. Always. But because I like them so much, I see that change.

Have you got anything to do with that change?

Have I? Not that I know of.

Do you think that you've played any role in the change of popular music in the last four years?

I hope not. (laughs)

Well, a lot of people say you have.

(laughs) Well, you know, I'm not one to argue. (laughs)

There's a lot of talk about you and Albert Grossman, your relationship with Albert Grossman, and whether he's going to continue to manage you.

Well... as far as I know, things will remain the same, until the length of our contract. And if we don't sign another contract, or if he does not have a hand in producing my next concerts or have a hand in any of my next work, it's only because he's too busy. 'Cause he's got so many acts now... it's so hard for him to be in all places all the time. I mean you know, it's the old story... you can't be in two places at once. That old story. You know what I mean?

When does your contract with him expire?

Sometime this year.

You were supposed to leave Columbia and sign with MGM? A million dollars... what happened to that?

It... went up in smoke.

Did you want a new label?

I didn't, no.

Who did?

I believe my advisors.

I take it you haven't had any recent trouble with Columbia, like you used to have in the beginning...

No... no.

Do you know approximately how many songs that you've recorded that have not been released? Like songs left over from recording John Wesley Harding or Blonde On Blonde? Do you have any idea how many?

Well, we try to use them all. There may be a few lying around.

What do you think was the best song, popular song, to come out last year?

Uhh... I like that one... of Creedence Clearwater Revival — "Rolling On the River?"

Any others?

George Jones had one called "Small Town Laboring Man."

You've been very reluctant to talk to reporters, the press and so on... why is that?

Why would you think?

Well, I know why you won't go on those things.

Well, if you know why, you tell 'em... 'cause I find it hard to talk about. People don't understand how the press works. People don't understand that the press, they just use you to sell papers. And, in a certain way, that's not bad... but when they misquote you all the time, and when they just use you to fill in some story. And when you read it after, it isn't anything the way you pictured it happening. Well, anyhow, it hurts. It hurts because you think you were just played for a fool. And the more hurts you get, the less you want to do it. Ain't that correct?

Were there any writers that you met that you liked? That you felt did good jobs? Wrote accurate stories...

On what?

On you. For instance, I remember two big pieces—one was in the New Yorker, by Nat Hentoff...

Yeah, I like 'em. I like that. In a way, I like 'em all, whether I feel bad about 'em or not, in a way I like 'em all. I seldom get a kick out of them, Jann, but... I mean, I just can't be spending my time reading what people write, (laughter). I don't know anybody who can, do you?

Do you set aside a certain amount of time during the day to... how much of the day do you think about songwriting and playing the guitar?

Well, I try to get it when it comes. I play the guitar wherever I find one. But I try to write the song when it comes. I try to get it all... 'cause if you don't get it all, you're not gonna get it. So the best kinds of songs you can write are in motel rooms and cars... places which are all temporary. 'Cause you're forced to do it. Rather, it lets you go into it.

You go into your kitchen and try to write a song, and you can't write a song—I know people who do this—I know some songwriters who go to work every day, at 8:30 and come home at 5:00. And usually bring something back... I mean, that's legal too. It just depends on... how you do it. Me, I don't have those kind of things known to me yet, so I just get 'em when they come. And when they don't come, I don't try for it.

There's been a lot of artists who have done your songs... songs that you have released and songs that you haven't released. Have you written any songs lately for any other artists to do, specifically for that artist? Or any of your old songs.

I wrote "To Be Alone With You"—that's on Nashville Skyline—I wrote it for Jerry Lee Lewis. The one on Nashville Skyline. (Laughter.) He was down there when we were listening to the playbacks, and he came in. He was recording an album next door. He listened to it. I think we sent him a dub.

"Peggy Day." I kind of had the Mills Brothers in mind when I did that one (laughter).

Have you approached them yet? (Laughter.)

No, unfortunately, I haven't.

During what period of time did you write the songs on Nashville Skyline? During the month before you went down to do it or...

Yeah, about a month before we did it. That's why it seemed to be all connected.

You're going to do your next album in Nashville?

I don't know, Jann. I don't know where I'm gonna be doing the next album. Sometimes I envy the Beatles... they just go down to the studio, and play around... I mean, you're bound to get a record. You know what I mean? Bound to get a record. Their studio is just a drive away... boy, I'd have an album out every month. I mean, how could you not?

Have you ever thought about getting four- or eight-track equipment up where you live?

Well, everyone's talking about that now. But it's just talk as far as I know. I would come to New York if I wanted to use the studio, because it's all here... if you need a good engineer, or if you need a song, or somebody to record it, an artist... whereas, some place like up in the country there, in the mountains, you could get a studio in, but that doesn't guarantee you anything else but the studio. You can get violin players, cello players, you can get dramatic readers... you can get anybody at the drop of a hat, in New York City. I imagine it's that way over in London, where the Beatles make their records. Anything they want to put on their record, they just call up and it's there. I'd like to be in that position.

What do you look for when you make a record... I mean, what qualities, do you judge it by when you hear it played back?

Um... for the spirit. I like to hear a good lick once in a while. Maybe it's the spirit... don't you think so? I mean, if the spirit's not there, it don't matter how good a song it is or...

What do you think of the current rock and roll groups doing all the country music?

Well, once again, it really doesn't matter what kind of music they do, just so long as people are making music. That's a good sign. There are certainly more people around making music than there was when I was growing up. I know that.

Do you find any that are particularly good—country rock, or merely rock and roll bands, doing country material, using steel guitars?

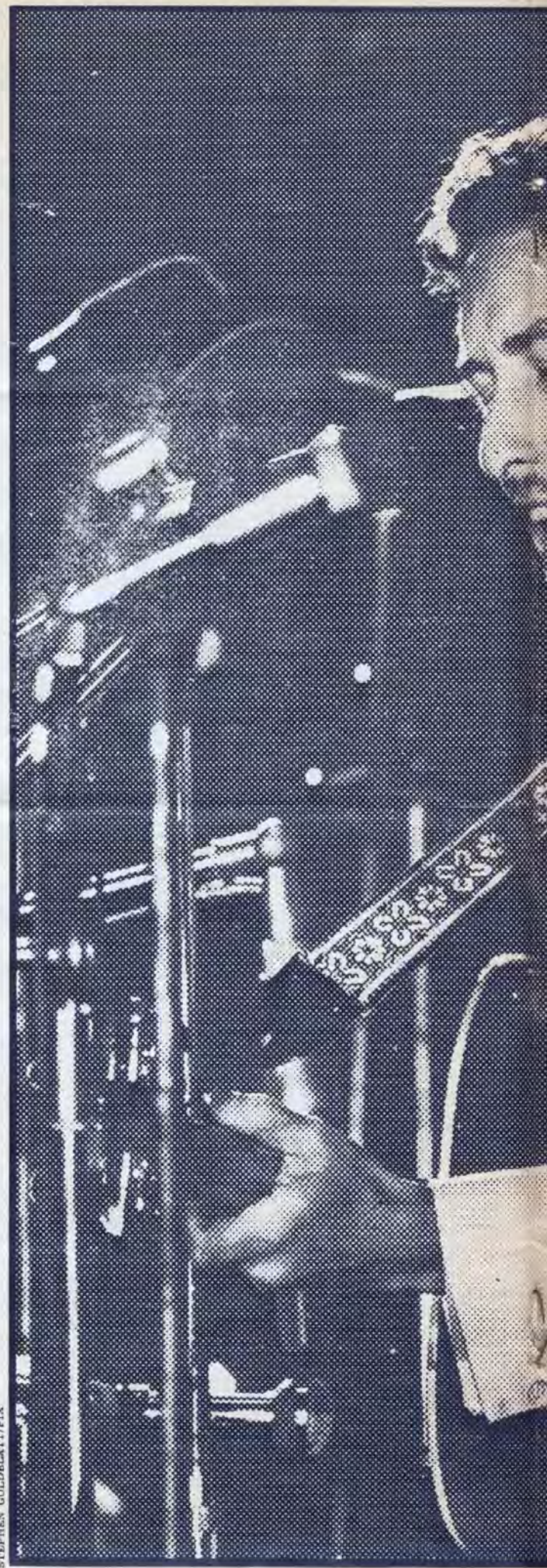
As long as it sounds good...

Do any particular one of those groups appeal to you?

Who... who are in those groups?

Oh, Flying Burrito Brothers...

Boy, I love them... the Flying Burrito Brothers, unh-huh. I've always known Chris, you know, from when he was in the Byrds. And he's always been a fine musician. Their records knocked me out. (laughs) That poor little hippie boy on



STEPHEN GOLDBLATT/FIX



his way to town... (laughs).

What about the Byrds... they did a country album...

Sweetheart? Well, they had a distinctive sound, the Byrds... they usually were hanging in there...

Of all the versions of "This Wheel's On Fire," which do you like the best?

Uh... the Band's. Who else did it?

Julie Driscoll... the Byrds did it.

I remember hearing the Julie Driscoll one... I don't remember hearing the Byrds.

What was the origin of that collection of songs, of that tape?

The origin of it? What do you mean? *Where was that done?*

Well that was done out in... out in somebody's basement. Just a basement tape. It was just for...

Did you do most, did you write most of those songs, those demos, for yourself?

Right.

And then decide against them?

No, they weren't demos for myself, they were *Jams* of the songs. I was being PUSHED again... into coming up with some songs. So, you know... you know how those things go.

Do you have any artists in mind for any of those particular songs?

No. They were just fun to do. That's all. They were a kick to do. Fact, I'd do it all again. You know... that's really the way to do a recording—in a peaceful, relaxed setting—in somebody's basement. With the windows open... and a dog lying on the floor.

Let me explain something about this interview. If you give one magazine an interview, then the other magazine wants an interview. If you give one to one, then the other one wants one. So pretty soon, you're in the interview business... you're just giving interviews. Well, as you know, this can really get you down. Doing nothing but giving interviews.

So the only way you can do it is to give press conferences. But you see, you have to have something to give a press conference about. Follow me? So that's why I don't give interviews. There's no mysterious reason to it, there's nothing organized behind it... it's just that if

you give an interview to one magazine, then another one'll get mad.

Why have you chosen to do this interview?

'Cause this is a music paper. Why would I want to give an interview to Look magazine? Tell me, why?

I don't know... to sell records.

To sell records, I could do it. Right. But I have a gold record *without* doing it, do you understand me? Well, if I had to sell records, I'd be out there giving interviews to everybody. Don't you see? Mr. Clive Davis, he was president of Columbia Records, and he said he wouldn't be surprised if this last album sold a million units. Without giving one interview. Now you tell me, Jann, why am I going to go out and give an interview?

To get hassled...

Why would I want to go out and get hassled? If they're gonna pay me, I mean... who wants to do that. I don't.

Do you have any idea how much money your publishing has brought in over the last five years?

Well, now, that's difficult to answer because my songs are divided up into three, no, four companies. So there you have it. There you have it right there.

Which companies?

Well, I've got songs with Leeds Music. I've got songs with Whitmark Music. I've got a bunch of songs with Dwarf Music. I've got songs in Big Sky Music. So you see, my songs are divided up, so...

Do you own Big Sky Music wholly yourself?

It's my company. I chose to start this company.

If you put all the estimated income from those four companies together, or estimated gross income from publishing from those, it must be a considerable...

Not as much as the Beatles.

Yeah, but other than the Beatles?

Not as much as those writers from Motown.

Other than the writers from Motown...

You know there are many more musical organizations than me. They've got staffs of writers bringing in more money than you can dream of.

What songwriters do you like? Do you like any of the teams like Holland, Dozier, Holland or Hayes and Porter?

Yeah, I do. I know that fellow—what's his name, Isaac Hayes?—he does a real nice song called "The Other Woman." I believe that's the title to it. It's on his album. I think it's on his new one. I don't believe he wrote it, though.

Otis Redding was playing at the Whiskey A Go Go, a couple years ago, you came in and talked to Otis. What was that all about?

He was gonna do "Just Like A Woman." I played him a dub of it. I think he mighta cut it for a demo... I don't think he ever recorded it, though. He was a fine man.

Why did you think "Just Like A Woman" would be a good song for him to do?

Well I didn't necessarily think it was a good song for him to do, but he asked me if I had any material. It just so happened that I had the dubs from my new album. So we went over and played it. I think he took a dub... that was the first and only time I ever met him.

I take it that you dug Otis real well. Are there any other soul singers that you dig as much as Otis?

You mean rhythm and blues pop?

Well, you know I've always liked Mavis Staples ever since she was a little girl.

—Continued



JIM MARSHALL



JIM MARSHALL

DYLAN

She's always been my favorite . . . she's always had my favorite voice.

Have you heard their new *Stax* album?

I heard one of those . . . the ones they're doing with other people. Yeah, I heard that, that one that Pop Staples did. (laughs) It's ridiculous. Oh, Steve Cropper did do a nice song on that album . . . that he wrote, called "Water."

On his own album?
No, not on his own album. On the *Jammed Together* album. I find it interesting seeing . . . Mr. Staples being referred to as "Pop." (laughter)

Have you heard the Steve Cropper solo album?

Yeah, I heard that too.
Do you like that?
Sure. I've always dug Steve Cropper . . . his guitar playing. Ever since the first Booker T. record. I heard that back in the Midwest. Yeah, everybody was playing like him.

What records of Otis did you dig?
I've got one that contained that song where he was born in a tent by the river—(hums and sings) "A Change Is Gonna Come." Yeah, I like that one.

What is your day-to-day life like?
Hmmm . . . there's no way I could explain that to you, 'an. Every day is different. Depends on what I'm doing.

Do you paint a lot?
Well, I may be fiddling around with the car or I may be painting a boat, or . . . possibly washing the windows. I just do what has to be done. I play a lot of music, when there's a call in . . . I'm always trying to put shows together, which never come about. I don't know what it is, but sometimes we get together and I say, "Okay, let's take six songs and do 'em up." So we do six songs, we got 'em in, let's say, 40 minutes . . . we got a stopwatch timing 'em. But I mean nothing happens to it. We could do anything with it, but I mean . . .

Boy, I hurried . . . I hurried for a long time. I'm sorry I did. All the time you're hurrying, you're not really as aware as you should be. You're trying to make things happen instead of just letting it happen. You follow me?

That's the awkwardness of this interview.

Well, I don't find anything awkward about it. I think it's going real great.
The purpose of any interview is to let the person who's being interviewed unload his head.

Well, that's what I'm doing.
And trying to draw that out is . . .
Boy, that's a good . . . that'd be a great title for a song. "Unload my head. Going down to the store . . . going down to the corner to unload my head." I'm gonna write that up when I get back. (laughter) "Going to Tallahassee to unload my head."

What do you think can happen with your career as a singer?

What are the possibilities?
Go on the road, continue to make records . . . for instance, do you foresee continuing to make records?

If they're enjoyable. I'm going to have to receive a certain amount of enjoyment out of my work pretty soon. I'd like to keep a little closer to the studios than I am now. It's awful hard for me to make records when I've got to go 4,000 miles away, you know? Like I say, when you do have these companies around who're just there to serve . . .

Are you thinking of moving to Nashville? I mean that would be . . .

Well, if I moved to Nashville, I'd still have to book studio time, wouldn't I?
But still, you'd have the accessibility of the session men and the engineers . . .

That's true. But I'd have to do everything with that same sound, wouldn't I? I couldn't really use a variety of techniques.

Can you see a time when you would stop making records?

Well, let's put it this way: making a record isn't any more than just recording a song, for me. Well, that's what it's been up 'til now. Not necessarily going into the studio for any other reason than to record a song. So, if I was to stop writing songs, I would stop recording. Or let's say, if I was to stop singing, I guess I would stop recording. But I don't foresee that. I'll be recording, 'cause that's a way for me to unload my head.

You said in one of your songs on *Highway 61* . . . "I need a dump truck,

mama, to unload my head." Do you still need a dump truck or something? (laughter)

What album was that?
It was on *Highway 61*. What I'm trying to ask is what are the changes that have gone on between the time you did *Highway 61* and Nashville *Skyline* or John Wesley Harding?

The changes. I don't think I know exactly what you mean.
How has life changed for you? Your approach to . . . your view of what you do . . .

Not much. I'm still the same person. I'm still uhh . . . going at it in the same old way. Doing the same old thing.
Do you think you've settled down, and slowed down?

I hope so. I was going at a tremendous speed . . . at the time of my *Blonde* or *Blonde* album, I was going at a tremendous speed.

How did you make the change? The motorcycle accident?

I just took what came. That's how I made the changes. I took what came.

What do they come from?

What was what coming from? Well, they come from the same sources that everybody else's do. I don't know if it comes from within oneself anymore than it comes from without oneself. Or outside of oneself. Don't you see what I mean? Maybe the inside and the outside are both the same. I don't know. But, I feel it just like everyone else. What's that old line—there's a line from one of those old songs out . . . "I can recognize it in others, I can feel it in myself." You can't say that's from the inside or the outside, it's like both.

What people do you think from the outside have influenced a change?

Uhh . . . what change are you talking about?

The change from *Highway 61* to Nashville *Skyline* . . .

I'm not probably as aware of that change as you are, because I haven't listened to that album *Highway 61* . . . I'd probably do myself a lot of good going back and listening to it. I'm not aware of that change. I probably could pinpoint it right down if I heard that album, but I haven't heard it for quite a while.

Are there any old albums that you do listen to?

Well, I don't sit around and listen to my records, if that's what you mean.

Like picking up a high school yearbook, and just . . .

Oh, I love to do that . . . every once in a while. That's the way I listen to my records—every once in a while. Every once in a while I say "Well, I'd like to see that fellow again."

Are there any albums or tracks from the albums that you think now were particularly good?

On any of my old albums?

Uhh . . . As songs or as performances?

Songs.

Oh yeah, quite a few.

Which ones?

Well, if I was performing now . . . if I was making personal appearances, you would know which ones, because I would play them. You know? But I don't know which ones I'd play now. I'd have to pick and choose. Certainly couldn't play 'em all.

Thinking about the titles on *Bringing It All Back Home*.

I like "Maggie's Farm." I always liked that song. "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Blowing In the Wind" and "Girl From the North Country" and "Boots of Spanish Leather" and "Times They Are A'Changing" . . . I liked "Ramona." . . . Where did you write "Desolation Row"? Where were you when you wrote that?

I was in the back of a taxi-cab.
In New York?

Yeah.
During the period where you were recording songs with a rock and roll accompaniment, with a full-scale electric band, of those rock and roll songs that you did, which do you like?

The best rock and roll songs . . . which ones are there?

Uhh . . . "Like A Rolling Stone" . . . Yeah, I probably liked that the best.

And that was the Tom Wilson record . . . how come you never worked with that collection of musicians again?

Well, Michael Bloomfield, he was touring with Paul Butterfield at that time . . . and I could only get 'im when I could. So I wouldn't wait on Michael Bloomfield to make my records. He sure does play good, though. I missed having him there, but what could you do?

In talking about the songs as performances, which of the performances that you did, that were recorded . . .

I like "Like A Rolling Stone" . . . I can hear it now, now that you've mentioned it. I like that sound. You mean, which recorded performances?

Yeah, I mean in your performance of the song . . .

Oh . . . I like some of them on the last record, but I don't know, I tend to close up in the studio. After I've . . . I could never get enough presence on me. Never really did sound like me, to me.

On Nashville *Skyline*, you see a lot of echo, and a lot of limiting. What made you decide to alter your voice technically and use those kind of studio tricks? Rather than doing it more or less flat?

Well, how would you have liked it better? Would you have liked it flat?

I dig the echo.

I do too. I dig the echo myself. That's why . . . we did it that way. The old records do sound flat. I mean there's just a flatness to them, they're like two-dimensional. Isn't that right? Well in this day and age, there's no reason to make records like that.

"Nashville Skyline Rag" was that a jam that took place in a studio, or did you write the lyrics before? . . .

Ummm . . . I had that little melody quite a while before I recorded it.

There's a cat named Alan Weberman who writes in the *East Village Other*. He calls himself the world's leading Dylanologist. You know him?

No . . . oh, yes, I did. Is this the guy who tears up all my songs?
Well,

he oughta take a rest. He's way off, I saw something he wrote about "All Along the Watchtower," and boy, let me tell you, this boy's off. Not only did he create some type of fantasy—he had Alan Ginsberg in there—he couldn't even hear the words to the song right. He didn't hear the song right. Can you believe that? I mean this fellow couldn't hear the words . . . or something. I bet he's a hard working fellow, though. I bet he really does a good job if he could find something to do but it's too bad it's just my songs, 'cause I don't really know if there's enough material in my songs to sustain someone who is really out to do a big job. You understand what I mean?

I mean a fellow like that would be much better off writing about Tolstoy, or Dostoevsky, or Freud . . . doing a really big analysis of somebody who has countless volumes of writings. But here's me, just a few records out. Somebody devoting so much time to those few records, when there's such a wealth of material that hasn't even been touched yet, or hasn't even been heard or read . . . that escapes me. Does it escape you?

I read that, in this East Village *Other*; I read it . . . and it was clever. And I got a kick out of reading it (laughter) on some level, but I didn't want to think anybody was taking it too seriously. You follow me?

He's just representative of thousands of people who do take it seriously.

Well, that's their own business. Why don't I put it that way. That's their business and his business. But . . . I'm the source of that and I don't know if it's my business or not, but I'm the source of it. You understand? So I see it a little differently than all of them do.

People in your audience, they obviously take it very seriously, and they look to you for something . . .

Well, I wouldn't be where I am today without them. So, I owe them . . . my music, which I would be playing for them.

Does the intensity of some of the response annoy you?

No. No, I rather enjoy it.

I'm trying to get back to the thing about being a symbol of youth culture, being a spokesman for youth culture . . . what're your opinions or thoughts on that? At some point you pick up the paper or the magazine and find out that this is happening and you know that you're considered like this. That people are watching you for that . . . and you've got to say to yourself, "Am I hung-up?"

Well, not any more than anybody else is, who performs in public. I mean, everyone has his following.

What do you think your following is like?

Well, I think there are all kinds . . . I imagine they're . . . you would probably know just as much about that as I would. You know, they're all kinds of people. I remember when I use to do concerts, you couldn't pin 'em down. All the road managers and the sound equipment carriers, and even the truck drivers would notice how different the audiences were, in terms of individual people. How different they . . . like sometimes I might have a concert and all the same kind of people show up. I mean, what does that mean?

Did you vote for President?

We got down to the polls too late. (laughter)

People are always asking about what does this song mean and what does this song mean, and a lot of them seem to be based on some real person, just like any kind of fiction, you expect . . . are there any songs that you can relate to particular people, as having inspired the song?

Not now I can't.

What do you tell somebody who says, "What is 'Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat' about?"

It's just about that. I think that's something I mighta taken out of the newspaper. Mighta seen a picture of one in a department store window. There's really no more to it than that. I know it can get blown up into some kind of illusion. But in reality, it's no more than that. Just a leopard skin pillbox. That's all.

How did you come in contact with the *Band*?

Well, there used to be this young lady that worked up at Al Grossman's office—her name was Mary Martin, she's from Canada. And she was a rather persevering soul, as she hurried around



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the office on her job; she was a secretary; did secretarial work, and knew all the bands and all the singers from Canada. She was from Canada. Anyway, I needed a group to play electric songs.

Where did you hear them play?

Oh, I never did hear them play. I think the group I wanted was Jim Burton and Joe Osborne. I wanted Jim Burton, and Joe Osborne to play bass, and Mickey Jones. I knew Mickey Jones, he was playing with Johnny Rivers. They were all in California, though. And there was some difficulty in making that group connect. One of them didn't want to fly, and Mickey couldn't make it immediately, and I think Jim Burton was playing with a television group at that time.

He used to play with Ricky Nelson?

Oh, I think this was after that. He was playing with a group called the Shindogs, and they were on television. So he was doing that job. Anyway, that was the way it stood, and Mary Martin kept pushing this group who were out in New Jersey—I think they were in Elizabeth, New Jersey or Hartford, Connecticut, or some town close to around New York. She was pushing them, and she had two of the fellows come up to the office, so we could meet. And it was no more . . . no more, no less. I just asked them if they could do it and they said they could (laughs). These two said they could. And that was how it started. Easy enough, you know.

How come you never made an album with them?

We tried. We cut a couple sides in the old New York Columbia studios. We cut two or three and right after "Positively 4th Street," we cut some singles and they didn't really get off the ground. You oughta hear 'em. You know, you could find 'em. They didn't get off the ground. They didn't even make it on the charts.

Consequently, I've not been back on the charts since the singles. I never did much care for singles, 'cause you have to pay so much attention to them. Unless you make your whole album full of singles. You have to make them separately. So I didn't really think about them too much that way.

But, playing with the Band was a natural thing. We have a real different sound. Real different. But it wasn't like anything heard. I heard one of the records recently . . . it was on a jukebox. "Please Crawl Out Your Window."

That was one of them? What were the others?

There were some more songs out of that same session . . . "Sooner or Later"—that was on *Blonde on Blonde*. That's one of my favorite songs.

What role did you play in the "Big Pink" album, the album they made by themselves.

Well, I didn't do anything on that album. They did that with John Simon.

Did you play piano on it or anything?

No. *What kind of sound did you hear when you went in to make John Wesley Harding?*

I heard the sound that Gordon Lightfoot was getting, with Charlie McCoy and Kenny Buttrey. I'd used Charlie and Kenny both before, and I figured if he could get that sound, I could. But we couldn't get it. (laughs) It was an attempt to get it, but it didn't come off. We got a different sound . . . I don't know what you'd call that . . . it's a muffled sound.

There used to be a lot of friction in the control booth, on these records I used to make. I didn't know about it, I wasn't aware of them until recently. Somebody would want to put limiters on this and somebody would want to put an echo on that, someone else would have some other idea. And myself, I don't know anything about any of this. So I just have to leave it up in the air. In someone else's hands.

The friction was between the engineer and the producer . . .

No, the managers and the advisors and the agents.

Do you usually have sessions at which all these people are there, or do you prefer to close them up?

Well, sometimes there's a whole lot of people. Sometimes you can't even move there's so many people . . . other times, there's no one. Just the musicians.

Which is more comfortable for you?

Well, it's much more comfortable when there's . . . oh, I don't know, I could

have it both ways. Depends what kind of song I'm gonna do. I might do a song where I want all those people around. Then I do another song, and have to shut the lights off, you know?

Was "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowland" originally planned as a whole side?

That song is an example of a song . . . it started out as just a little thing, "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowland," but I got carried away, somewhere along the line. I just sat down at a table and started writing. At the session itself. And I just got carried away with the whole thing . . . I just started writing and I couldn't stop. After a period of time, I forgot what it was all about, and I started trying to get back to the beginning. (laughs) Yeah.

Did you plan to go down and make a double record set?

No. Those things just happen when you have the material.

Do you like that album?

Blonde on Blonde? Yeah. But like I always think that a double set could be made into a single album. But I dug *Blonde on Blonde* and the Beatle's thing. They are like huge collections of songs. But a real great record can usually be compacted down . . . although the Beatles have that album, and *Blonde on Blonde* . . . I'm glad that there's two sides, that there's that much . . .

How long did that take to record?

Blonde on Blonde? Well I cut it in between. I was touring and I was doing it whenever I got a chance to get into the studio. So it was in the works for awhile. I could only do maybe two or three songs at a time.

How long did John Wesley Harding take?

You mean how many sessions? That took three sessions, but we did them in a month. The first two sessions were maybe three weeks to a month apart, and the second one was about two weeks from the third.

John Wesley Harding—why did you call the album that?

Well, I called it that because I had that song, "John Wesley Harding." It didn't mean anything to me. I called it that, Jann, 'cause I had the song "John Wesley Harding," which started out to be a long ballad. I was gonna write a ballad on . . . like maybe one of those old cowboy . . . you know, a real long ballad. But in the middle of the second verse, I got tired. I had a tune, and I didn't want to waste the tune, it was a nice little melody, so I just wrote a quick third verse, and I recorded that.

But it was a silly little song (laughs) . . . I mean, it's not a commercial song, in any kind of sense. At least, I don't think it is. It was the one song on the album which didn't seem to fit in. And I had it placed here and there, and I didn't know what I was gonna call the album anyway. No one else had any ideas either. I placed it last and I placed it in the middle somewhere, but it didn't seem to work. So somehow that idea came up to just put it first and get done with it right away, and that way when it comes up, no one'll . . . you know, if someone's listening to "All Along the

Watchtower" and that comes up, and they'll say, "Wow, what's that?" (laughs)

You knew that cowboy . . .

I knew people were gonna be brought down when they heard that, and say "Wow, what's that?" You know a lot

of people said that to me, but I knew it in front. I knew people were gonna listen to that song and say that they didn't understand what was going on, but they would've singled that song out later, if we hadn't called the album *John Wesley Harding* and placed so much importance on that, for people to start wondering about it . . . if that hadn't been done, that song would've come up and people would have said it was a throw-away song. You know, and it would have probably got in the way of some other songs.

See, I try very hard to keep my songs from interfering with each other. That's all I'm trying to do. Place 'em all out on the disc. Sometimes it's really annoying to me, when I listen to all these dubs; I listen to one, and then I put on another one, and the one I heard before is still on my mind, I'm trying to keep away from that.

Why did you choose the name of the outlaw John Wesley Harding?

Well, it fits in tempo. Fits right in tempo. Just what I had at hand.

What other titles did you have for the album?

Not for that one. That was the only title that came up for that one. But for the *Nashville Skyline* one, the title came up *John Wesley Harding, Volume II*. We were gonna do that . . . the record company wanted to call the album *Love Is All There Is*. I didn't see anything wrong with it, but it sounded a little spooky to me . . .

What about Blonde on Blonde?

Well, that title came up when . . . I don't even recall how exactly it came up, but I do know it was all in good faith. It has to do with just the word. I don't know who thought of that. I certainly didn't.

Of all the albums as albums, excluding your recent ones, which one do you think was the most successful in what it was trying to do? Which was the most fully realized, for you?

I think the second one. The second album I made.

Why?

Well, I got a chance to . . . I felt real good about doing an album with my own material. My own material and I picked a little on it, picked the guitar, and it was a big Gibson—I felt real accomplished on that. "Don't Think Twice." Got a chance to do some of that. Got a chance to play in open tuning . . . "Oxford Town," I believe that's on that album. That's open tun-

ing. I got a chance to do talking blues. I got a chance to do ballads, like "Girl From the North Country." It's just because it had more variety. I felt good at that.

Of the electric ones, which do you prefer?

Well, sound-wise, I prefer this last one. 'Cause it's got the sound. See, I'm listening for sound now.

As a collection of songs?

Songs? Well, this last album maybe means more to me, 'cause I did undertake something. In a certain sense. And . . . there's a certain pride in that.

It was more premeditated than the others? I mean, you knew what you were gonna go after?

Right.

Where did the name Nashville Skyline . . .

Well, I always like to tie the name of the album in with some song. Or if not some song, some kind of general feeling. I think that just about fit because it was less in the way, and less specific than any of the other ones on there.

Certainly couldn't call the album *Lady Lay*. I wouldn't have wanted to call it that, although that name was brought up. It didn't get my vote, but it was brought up. *Peggy Day—Lay, Peggy Day*, that was brought up. A lot of things were brought up. *Tonight I'll Be Staying Here with Peggy Day*. That's another one. Some of the names just didn't seem to fit. *Girl From the North Country*. That was another title which didn't really seem to fit. Picture me on the front holding a guitar and *Girl From the North Country* printed on top. (laughs) *Tell Me That It Isn't Peggy Day*. I don't know who thought of that one.

What general thing was happening that made you want to start working with the Band, rather than working solo?

I only worked solo, because there wasn't much going on. There wasn't. There were established people around . . . yeah, The Four Seasons . . . there were quite a few other established acts. But I worked alone because it was easier to. Plus, everyone else I knew was working alone, writing and singing. There wasn't much opportunity for groups or bands then; there wasn't. You know that.

When did you decide to get one together, like that? You played at Forest Hills, that was where you first appeared with a band? Why did you feel the time had come?

To do that? Well, because I could pay a backing group now. See, I didn't want to use a backing group unless I could pay them.

Do you ever get a chance to work frequently with the Band? In the country.

Work? Well, work is something else. Sure, we're always running over old material. We're always playing, running over old material. New material . . . and different kinds of material. Testing out this and that.

What do you see yourself as—a poet, a singer, a rock and roll star, married man . . .

All of those. I see myself as it all. Married man, poet, singer, songwriter, custodian, gatekeeper . . . all of it. I'll be it all. I feel "confined" when I have to choose one or the other. Don't you?

You're obligated to do one album a year?

Yes.

Is that all you want to do?

No, I'd like to do more. I would do dozens of them if I could be near the studio. I've been just lazy, Jann. I've been just getting by, so I haven't really thought too much about putting out anything really new and different.

You've heard the Joan Baez album of all your songs . . .

Yeah, I did . . . I generally like everything she does.

Are there any particular artists that you like to see do your

songs? Yeah, Elvis Presley. I liked Elvis Presley. Elvis Presley recorded a song of mine. That's the one recording I treasure the most . . . it was called "Tomorrow Is A Long Time." I wrote it but never recorded it.

Which album is that on?

Kismet.

I'm not familiar with it at all.

He did it with just guitar.





Continued

Dave Ray train hollers, and pretty dismal. (19) "Cocaine Blues" — not exactly up to the job Dave Van Ronk has done on this, but a lovely, relaxed version of the song every East Coast folksinger had to master. "Yonder comes my baby, all dressed in purple/Hey, baby, I wanna see your nipples."

(20, 21, 22 & 23) The Infamous Medley: "VD Blues," "VD Waltz," "VD City" is the best of them — it might remind one of "Heartbreak Hotel" — "The cold horrible dungeons, where the victims of syphilis lie... there's a street named for every disease here, Syph Alley and Clap Avenue... must you pay your way to this city with an hour of passion and vice..." (24) "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" — repeated on the first album. (25) "Ramblin' Round." (26) "Black Cross" — the Lord Buckley story of a black non-believer from a Southern town, lynched for his honesty Dylan's vocal mannerisms are a clear debt to or cop from Buckley, but it's a better effort than, say, "The Death of Emmett Till," which Dylan had recorded three months earlier on a radio show for WBAI-FM.

That show was never aired, for some reason; included were Izzy Young, Pete Seeger, Sis Cunningham, and Gil Turner. Dylan performed a song called "The Ballad of Donald White" as well, an interesting tale of a man demanding to be returned to prison because he cannot function in normal society. White kills a man, and is hanged instead of being allowed to find a home in prison. This number prompts Young to announce, in a beautifully patronizing tone, that "this is the first psychological song," which was nonsense, but part of the game that was being played in those days. The interview includes a few other priceless bits, including one where Pete Seeger asks Bob how he writes songs. "Do you just spread out the newspaper in the morning until you find a story that gets you upset?" Bob Dylan, re-write man. The show closes with a moanin' and groanin' of "Blowin' in the Wind." "I really do just take 'em out of the air," Bob had been saying.

[THE BROADSIDE RECORDINGS AND THE RISE OF BLIND BOY GRUNT]

In the Fall of 1963 (according to best information) Dylan made a number of recordings for Broadside Records—really, for the *Broadside scene*. Sitting in on this session were Gil Turner, Phil Ochs, Gordon Friesen, and Sis Cunningham. Three of the cuts recorded have been released on an LP, still available, called *Broadside Ballads No. 1*, Broadside Records BR-301, issued November 1963. The songs include "John Brown" (discussed below in the "live" section), "Only A Hobo," a rather poor song about the death of a tramp (of which a couple of other versions exist), and "Talking Devil," which is a gas. The song predates a verse from the Stones' "Jigsaw Puzzle": "The gangster looks so frightening/With his luger in his hand/ But when he gets home to his children/ He's a family man." Dylan's "Talking Devil" is the brief tale of a night rider, "the devil," and BBG asks, "Wonder if his kids know who he is?" It's the only bit of humor on the whole Broadside LP.

None of the other Broadside recordings have been released, perhaps because of contract problems or perhaps because Bob chose to keep them in the past. The most surprising of these is "The Cough Song"—none other than "Nashville Skyline Rag" for guitar and harmonica! The harp sketches out the part the band plays on the 1969 recording, and keeps right on until Dylan laughs (Garbo Talks!). "Thta was the end. Right there before I coughed. It fades up." And then every-one cracks up.

The other recordings don't stand up so well, save for "Walking Down the Line," a fine road song with a bit of displaced

humor: "I saw the morning light/ I saw the morning light/ I'm an early riser, 'cause I didn't go to sleep last night." Another version was also cut for a publishing demo. "Hey, Hey, I'd Hate to Be You on That Dreadful Day" is a rough blues that might have surfaced as a tough rocker had Dylan held on to it and worked it out; as it is, the cut has a few flashes: "You're gonna walk naked, can't ride in no car/ Everyone's gonna see just what you are." "Playboys and Playgirls" reveals Dylan claiming he won't be sold down the river by the Hugh Hefner crew; "Train-a-Trailin'" is just that; and "Cuban Blockade" is a stiff number about that day "when everyone thought the world would end." As one of *Broadside's* editors said when *Highway 61 Revisited* hit the stores, "I wouldn't mind what he's doing now, if only he'd just write one good song against the war..."

nature of the material. "San Francisco Bay Blues," "Jesus Met the Woman at the Well," "Gypsy Davy," "Jesse James," and "Remember Me" receive this sort of performance—careful, studied, and a bit stiff. And then, in contrast to the rest of the session, Dylan begins to draw on that incredible reserve of spirit and tension that has made him a performing curator of the museum of American music. Slowly picking out the notes to "Pastures of Plenty," to his harp for the first time on the tapes, he captures a sense of age the song perhaps never knew before—a sense of passing. The pastures of plenty are a memory, a desire, a hope—never a reality. The "journey through valleys fill the day that I die," the broken witness "on the edge of your cities," is more a search than an affirmation, an attempt to find what has been lost, what perhaps never existed at all.

been made with an on-stage recorder—a semi-formal session, so to speak.

"There Was An Old Man" is a radically different version of that staple of Dylan collectors, "Only A Hobo." It's a dramatic, sensitive portrait of the tramp dead on the curb, the cop poking him into the gutter; not a shouting eulogy, but a story that is part of the city.

"He Was a Friend of Mine" is a beautiful soft song to a friend who "died on the road." It seems to have a sense of the dues one has to pay simply to live: "He never had enough money/ To pay his fine... and he was a friend of mine." The Byrds kept the title and the tune for the song about the Kennedy assassination.

Then comes "Talking Bear Mountain Picnic Massacre Disaster Blues," all about an excursion boat that's oversold and sinks from the crush of bodies, baskets, kids, and fried chicken. Dylan used to



With Joan Baez, 1964

[HOWDY, EAST ORANGE]

References to the bustling metropolis of East Orange, New Jersey pop up occasionally in Dylan's career: one "Talkin' New York" from the first album, in the little folk tale about a coffeehouse recorded for the "Minnesota Tapes." Sometime in early 1962, it seems, Dylan recorded a number of Woody Guthrie songs at the home of Sid and Bob Gleason, in, as the gig would have it, East Orange, N.J. Bob never released a Guthrie song commercially, though many of his songs have rung changes on Guthrie themes — most recently, "John Wesley Harding." Strangely, it was Dylan's love for Guthrie, not Bob's own music, that brought him his first national attention. Years ago, *Time* ran a short story about an itinerant folksinger who'd journeyed across country to visit the dying man, a kid hyped as a perfect choice to play Guthrie in a film biography. And that is a project still talked about.

Thinking back, it seems odd that given the nature of industry packaging Bob never recorded an album of Guthrie songs. It would have been a natural product for Columbia to suggest, along with the raft of other folksingers with their Guthrie albums and country singers, with their Jimmie Rodgers and Hank Williams records. Simply, Dylan was pushing ahead of the game, making up his own songs, looking for his own music even as he reached for a surer hold on his roots.

Most of the numbers are pretty much straightforward run-throughs, lacking in projection or feeling, adding little to the music, though the takes would no doubt delight Dylan fans simply because of the

It happens again with "On the Trail of the Buffalo." Guthrie set the song in the 1880's, but its power came from the fact that Guthrie himself was on that trail, looking for those endless herds that formed their own horizons. The harsh strumming of Dylan's guitar gives the song a deathly, scary tone; you know there was never a chance for the animals to last. The beasts were doomed even before they had captured our imagination, and the threat of death hovers over the cowboys of the song, riding the trail the buffalo had cut into the earth. "Outlaws watching to pick us off/ From the hills of the buffalo." It's this sense of forgotten history, alive in the soul of a man in the present, that is the source of the power of best American music, music that reaches for America, wherever and whatever it was, always with the sense that if we can uncover what it feels like to live when the country is old.

Dylan's "As I Went Out One Morning" and "The Wicked Messenger" and "Tears of Rage," the Band's "Rockin' Chair," "Across the Great Divide," and "King Harvest" are all songs of age, songs of a spiritual, not a factual adolescence. Unlike the "rock and roll revival," these songs and those that Guthrie wrote do not have to be "revived." They endure, and they last, and it is the burden of age that they carry that fixes their agelessness.

[THE GASLIGHT TAPES]

These tapes, recorded in the Gaslight Cafe in Greenwich Village in 1962, are interesting mainly because they comprise the only available recorded versions of three fine songs. The tape seems to have

crack his audiences up with this one back in 1963 and 1964, but the humor's not nearly as sharp as "Talking World War III" or "Talking John Birch."

The tape ends with Dylan and Dave Van Ronk combining for "Car Car," the gay little automobile song Woody Guthrie wrote to sing to his kids, and a short "Pretty Polly" by Rob. All in all, the tape is a nice memory of the days when Fourth Street wasn't "such a drag."

[...UNLIKE MOST OF THE SONGS NOWADAYS BEING WRITTEN UP IN TIN PAN ALLEY... — THE WITMARK DEMOS]

Dylan's first songs were published by Duches Music (BMI), but by the time of the *Freewheelin'* album Bob had affiliated with M. Witmark & Sons, one of the first music publishers in American history—a founder of Tin Pan Alley and a house of the most eminent prestige. It was virtually unprecedented for a "folksinger" to publish through such an agency, and this stroke of financial and PR genius set Dylan apart from the rest of the Village crowd as much as his songs did. Dylan wrote a large number of songs from 1962 and 1964 that he did not release on his albums, and these were cut as demos for Witmark. Many of these were eventually recorded by other artists, while some eventually reached the general public only through songbooks (*Bob Dylan, The Original*, Warner Bros.-7 Arts Music, and *Bob Dylan, A Collection*, Warner Bros.-7 Arts Music; Warner Bros.-7 Arts purchased M. Witmark some time ago). Some of the tapes discussed below may not in fact be Witmark demos — it's hard to tell—but they fall more readily into that category than any other.

—Continued

JIM MARSHALL

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Piano songs. In 1963 or 1964 Dylan recorded a number of songs, accompanying himself on piano, featuring what Al Kooper has called Bob's "beautifully untutored" keyboard work. Others, perhaps with more accuracy, have referred to the "ultimate flowering of the whorehouse piano." Whatever one calls it, the music brings to mind a strange amalgam of Jerry Lee Lewis, Skiu James, Mose Allison, Memphis Slim and Nicky Hopkins — a wilder, free style than on, say, "Dear Landlord" or "Ballad of a Thin Man." The vocals and the composition of a couple of these numbers represent a maturity and a grasp of the finest subtleties of American popular music that is simply not to be found in any of the recordings Dylan had released up to the time. A spare sense of restraint and an effortless timing characterize the singing — a feel, again, of age beyond years.

"I'll Keep It With Mine" is a song written for, of all people, Nico, who was a European groupie when Dylan and Grossman met her on a visit to the Continent. Nico eventually did come to the US, as they had urged, and recorded the song on her first album for Verve, *Chelsea Girl*. A. E. Mac, Denny of the Fairport Convention has also recorded the song, magnificently, for the Fairport Convention's album on A&M. None of these versions, though, give a hint of Dylan's performance. His piano accompaniment is a succession of quarter-note triplets, with the first heavily accented and reinforced by his tapping foot. The lyrics—reminiscent of *Another Side*—tell a train story, the singer softly pleading for a girl to remain. The melody is one of his best up to that point, with a fine understated verse and a gradual build-up in the chorus: "Everybody will help you/ Discover what you set out to find/ But if I/ Can save you any time/ Come one, give it to me/ I'll keep it with mine." The performance is a tour-de-force that really should have been released.

"California" is a little ditty in the vein of "Outlaw Blues," with a line that later found its way into that song: "I got my dark sunglasses/ I got for good luck my black tooth..." Its title comes from the verse, "San Francisco is fine/ It sure gets lotsa sun [just like "warm San Francisco nights?"]/ But I'm used to four seasons/ California's got but one." The piano here is much like that on "Black Crow Blues."

"Hmmm," says Bob, and hits his rinky-tink piano for Arthur Crudup's "That's Alright Mama," also Elvis' first record. The piano work is the finest example of Dylan's keyboard action extant; for three minutes he performs some finger-breaking pyrotechnics that must be heard to be believed. Near the end, he abruptly changes tempo, riffs, changes tempo again—and then the tape is out. The listener is invariably left breathless.

"Denise, Denise" is a pounding rocker with an infectious rhythm, the singer casting a cold eye at a girl who just won't cop out to being real. Maracas, piano and harp drive the best version of this number until Bob is ready for a line that would have entered our common language had the song ever been released: "I'm looking deep in your eyes, babe/ But all I see is myself."

There are three versions of "Bob Dylan's New Orleans Rag"—an incomplete take, a live cut from from an unreleased LP (see "Live Performances") and a full, rocking performance with harp and piano. We find Bob sitting on a stump in New Orleans: "I was feeling kinda low-down, dirty and mean/ When along came a stranger and he didn't even ask/ He said I know 'bouta woman who can fix you up fast." He leads the singer to a door marked "103" and then the fun starts. All sorts of laid-out, wiped-out, freaked-out fellows stumble out the door, moaning, crawling, unable to speak; Bob sees one that "looked like he'd been through a monkey wrench." The kid splits fast: "I musta run a mile in a minute or less." The piano pushes this remarkably fluid number to crazy heights of rhythm, until Bob wheezes: "Man, you're better off/ In your misery/ Than to tackle that woman/ At one-oh... three!"

Dylan also recorded demos of "Paths of Victory," a song of better-times-in-the-future recorded by Hamilton Camp; "Walking Down the Line" (see "Broadside Recordings"); "Percy's Song" (there are three demos of this—see "Live Performances"); "The Ballad of Emmett Till"; "The Walls of Redwing," a song about the Minnesota boys' reform school, recorded by Joan Baez; and "Seven Curses" (see "Live Performances"). One of his last performances for a demo



JIM MARSHALL

2476



**MIXED UP
CONFUSION**

**CORRINA,
CORRINA**

**BOB
DYLAN**

comes on "Tomorrow Is a Long Time," the song recorded by Elvis for the soundtrack of *Spinout* (RCA LSP 3702). The lyrics ride the same Elizabethan melody Dylan used for "Seven Curses," moving toward Dylan's finest statement of loneliness: "If tomorrow wasn't such a long time/ I'd lie in my bed again." The loneliness of the performance impresses one with the depth of feeling Dylan had invested in this song.

Even this take pales next to Dylan's vocal on the traditional Southern ballad "I've Been a Moonshiner," which Dylan called "The Bottle Song." The singing is among the best Bob has ever recorded, as he ornaments and phrases beautifully, demonstrating a control, especially when he soars to the highest notes, that is chilling in its power. It would have been good to have had this song around a few years ago when people complained that Dylan couldn't sing. The guitar and harmonica virtually lead the vocal — the drama of

this performance, which seems so aged that it might be from the edge of the grave, is like nothing Dylan has released to the public. "I'll go to some barroom/ And drink to my fill/ Where the women can't follow/ And see what I spend."

"Hero Blues" is a funny number in the vein of "It Ain't Me Babe," though closer in tone to Country Joe's "Not So Sweet Martha Lorraine" than to Dylan's own very serious song. "She reads too many books/ She got nails inside her head [!]/ She will not be satisfied until I wind up dead." And: "You need a different kinda man, babe/ You need, you need a Napoleon Bona-part." All he wants to do is love her, not kill for her. Too tough to be a hero, at least this time.

"Whatcha Gonna Do" is a gospel-styled member of the "where will you be on Judgment Day?" sort; "Ain't Gonna Grieve" affirms that the singer will not, in fact, grieve. These two numbers and "Farewell" seem to be from 1962; "Fare-

well" is an honest goodbye that moves quite nicely: "So it's fare thee well, my own true love/ We'll meet another day, another time/ It's not the leavin', that's a grievin' me/ But my true love who's bound to stay behind." Bob and Joan Baez used to sing this together, some years ago.

"Sometimes I'm In the Mood" may not be a demo; it's a weak song that may have been recorded around the same time as "Born To Win, Born To Lose" and "Quit Your Lowdown Ways." These three are not fully worked out, and play on very limited sorts of themes, with lyrics that do not go much beyond the song titles themselves.

Finally there's "The Eternal Circle," a sad, funny number about someone waiting for a song to be over—that someone being the singer, who wants to get at a good-looking girl who is watching him perform. The problem, as the lyrics say, is that "the song it was long" and the first thing is to finish it. Of course, when he finishes, she's gone, so what does he do? "I picked up my git-tar and began the next song."

[ON COLUMBIA—MIXED-UP CONFUSION]

Dylan's career on Columbia has been marked by a number of mistaken releases, changes in album art (the liner photos on *Blonde on Blonde* were re-arranged shortly after the LP's release, mixing and album programming (for a time, the most familiar version of "From a Buick 6" was replaced by an alternate take with different lyrics, and then removed and replaced by the original take). This sort of confusion has only added to the vinyl charisma of Dylan's recordings.

The *Freewheelin'* Bob Dylan. Sharp-eyed fans will have noticed that the liner notes to *Freewheelin'* announce the presence of a band (Bruce Langhorne, guitar; George Barnes, bass; Dick Wellstood, piano; Gene Ramey, string bass; and Herb Lovelle, drums) on "Don't Think Twice" and "Corrina, Corrina." While the group is vaguely audible on the latter cut it's obvious that "Don't Think Twice" was recorded as a solo performance. Columbia, however, released a single prior to *Freewheelin'* that did include the band—a different, stronger take of "Corrina" (a fully realized accompaniment, brilliant harmonica, and a vocal close to Chuck Willis) and the dazzling rocker, "Mixed-Up Confusion." "Confusion," an original, is a full-bopping tune with bouncy piano triplets and snappy drumming—"And I'm lookin' for a woman/who's head's mixed up like mine/ And I'm lookin' for some answers/ But I don't know who to ask!" Had this little gem been in circulation from 1963 through 1965 the fans at Newport might have been kinder to Bob when he returned to rock and roll. However, the single didn't exactly bust the charts, and was withdrawn soon after release. It was later issued in Holland in 1966 (CBS 2476) and is still available in the Benelux countries and in Germany. Try writing to Ku-De-We, Phonograph Department, Berlin, for information.

Following the release of "Confusion," someone at Columbia mixed up the programming for *Freewheelin'* itself. A small number of the LP's included four cuts omitted from the standard version: "Ramblin', Gamblin' Willie" (a delightful tale of a card shark who finally drew that dead man's hand—"He had twenty-seven children/ And never had a wife!); "Rocks and Gravel" (a railroad gang blues, very southern in tone, backed by the band mentioned above); "Let Me Die in My Footsteps" (an anti-fallout shelter song), and the famous banned-by-Ed Sullivan "Talking John Birch Society Blues" (a very funny routine about paranoia and bed-looking-under: "Looked deep down inside my toilet bowl— they got away!" and the priceless line, "I discovered there was red stripes on the American flag! Oh, Betsy Ross?"). Most of these albums were recalled immediately, but a number remained in sale in California for at least three months after release. The songs deleted pretty much match up to those actually released: "Masters of War" replaced "Let Me Die in My Footsteps" (on an out-take of "Footsteps" Bob stops the song in the middle and asks, "Do you want this one? It's so long... it's not that it's long, but it's such a drag... I've sung it so many times"); "Girl From the North Country" replaced "Rocks and Gravel"; "Bob Dylan's Dream" replaced "Ramblin' Gamblin' Willie"; and "Talking World War III Blues" replaced "Talking John Birch Society Blues."

Another Side of Bob Dylan. There are a number of out-takes from this session, and "East Laredo" seems to be one of them. Produced by Tom Wilson, it's a

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piano solo, with echoes of Ben E. King's "Spanish Harlem," a pretty number that would have made a good B-side for a single. Also from this session is "Lay Down Your Weary Tune," a song that seems to be a call to the quest for the perfect, unobtainable music. Stately, restrained and majestic, it is as much a break with the past as "My Back Pages," though the metaphors are musical, not political: "Lay down your weary tune/



Lay down the song you strum/ And rest yourself 'neath the strength of strings/ No voice can hope to hum."

It's also possible that the versions of "Bob Dylan's New Orleans Rag" and "Denise, Denise" that are recorded with piano, maracas, and harp are from this session.

Bringing It All Back Home. Dylan broke loose as a rock and roll singer on this album, with "On the Road Again," "Outlaw Blues," and "115th Dream," but it was "If You Gotta Go, Go Now," a natural, sexy rock and roll song, that had hinted at what was going to happen on *Bringing It All Back Home*. Dylan had been performing this number acoustically for some time, and it never failed to stop the show, as laughter and cheers broke over the singer's grin as he smiled back to the crowd: "It's not that I'm questioning you/ To take part in any kinda quiz/ It's just that I ain't got no watch/ And you keep asking me what time it is." A "Let's Spend the Night Together" with jokes. Supposedly set for American release in 1967, it seems clear that the cut was recorded as part of the sessions for *Bringing It All Back Home*: the piano-styled guitar of Bruce Langhorne is a delight, as are the back-up vocals, which seem quite girlish. It was released as a single in Europe in 1967 (b/w "To Ramona") and is still available in the Benelux markets (CBS 2921). Manfred Mann's excellent version prompted Dylan to announce that they did his material more justice than anyone else. "It's not that I'm asking/ For anything you never gave before/ It's just that I'll be sleeping soon/ And it'll be too dark for you to find the door."

Highway 61 Revisited. Aside from producing one of the two or three finest rock and roll albums ever made, the sessions for *Highway 61 Revisited* also produced their share of rarities. "Killing Me Alive (Barbed Wire Fence)" is the most outstanding — a tough, solid, tremendously exciting blues, with Kooper on organ and Bloomfield in his brash, I-Can-Play-Anything-Better-Than-You groove (and he just about could, too). Kooper chords for the rhythm and Bloomfield solos for fun, Bob shouting out the lyrics that ultimately give it all away: "You're gonna think this song is just a riff/ I know you're thinking this song is just a riff/ Unless you've been inside a tunnel and fell down 69,000 feet over a barbed wire fence." The lyrics also bear out what Dylan has said time and time again to disbelieving audiences: he makes up his songs as he goes along, building around lines and images that he really digs. The alternate version of "From a Buick 6" demonstrates this in-the-studio process, as do these words from "Killing Me Alive": "The Arabian doctor comes in, gives me a shot but he wouldn't tell me what it was that I got"—lines that later appeared, in different form, in "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues." The pattern is repeated in many other unreleased songs.

Also a product of this session was the first version of "Won't You Please Crawl Out Your Window," which featured what sounds like a xylophone and magnificent guitar from Bloomfield. Columbia accidentally released it under the title "Positively Fourth Street" (some gremlin must have mixed the labels), recalled it a week later, and then some months after released a different version of the song that included Robbie Robertson and probably

music and inventing the new music is simply what Dylan and the Band do; it's their life, their vocation.

A rather rare version of the Basement Tape gives one some idea of what this invention is like. Aside from the well-known fourteen songs, this copy also includes two particularly worked-out versions of "Tears of Rage," two of "Open the Door Richard," one other of "Quinn the Eskimo," and a hilarious version of "Nothing Was Delivered." As Dylan and the Band move from setting up to fooling around to the finished product, the songs are changed. "No," someone says after giving up on "Tears of Rage," "it's got to be in rock tempo." And the lyrics are altered to fit the beat, the phrasing changes, Robbie Robertson chooses a new riff, Manuel and Danko try out the high notes they muffed the first time around. Sometimes, as on the rejected "Nothing Was Delivered," something special happens. On this take, the tempo is speeded up, making the song less like the dirge of the final take and more like the theme song of a fun-loving gang leaning hard on a burn artist. Dylan steps out with an extravagant Elvis Presley riff: "You must provide some kind of answer—you must—you must do that!—you must provide those answers!" Dylan's Fats Domino piano work makes the cut a hilarious delight. The lyrics are not the same as on the better-known version; they change from take to take, as they do on the alternate versions of "Quinn the Eskimo," "Tears of Rage," and "Open the Door Richard."

The fact that these songs were not released by Dylan is indicative of a couple of things. First of all, this was music worked out — and in some cases written — with the Band; it was music, most likely, that would have been commercially recorded with them and not with the Nashville musicians of *Blonde on Blonde* or *John Wesley Harding*. Why Bob chose not to record with the Band is pretty obvious; it was time for them to try and make it on their own, to see if they could cut it without help. Secondly, this material was clearly not what Bob wanted to present to his audience when he returned to public life — something "older," something with more restraint and with superficially more clarity was what he had in mind. Like any artist, Dylan chooses what to reveal and what to keep for his own. That such a choice has, in this case, been taken out of his hands is something about which most must feel ambivalent. Garth Hudson's magnificent organ pushing Dylan's unmatched vocal on "This Wheel's On Fire," the kicks of "Tiny Montgomery" (a Southern dragster champ, word has it), or the still water of "I Shall Be Released" are moments that few would trade for anything. The Basement Tape is the album that almost never was.

[THE BASEMENT TAPE]
"The Basement Tape," recorded before *John Wesley Harding* in Woodstock on a home machine, is the best-known, most accessible and perhaps the most striking of all of Dylan's unreleased material (whether or not this ought to be called "unreleased" is up to the reader—all of it is now available on the *Great White Wonder* and *Troubled Troubador* (bootleg LPs). *ROLLING STONE* ran a comprehensive review of the session some time ago (June 22, 1968, Vol. II, No. 2), and since then most of the songs have been covered by various performers. One of the compositions, "I Shall Be Released," has been covered by almost everyone, from Joan Baez to the Box-Tops. Dylan's magnificent performance has not been touched; his vocal may well be the best he has ever recorded.

The sessions, which included the Band as a backing group, musically and on vocals, set down basic performances of songs Dylan was not intending to release himself but which were to be included in the Dwarf Music catalogue. Copies of the tape in the form of acetate discs were sent to Manfred Mann, the Byrds, and the Rolling Stones, among others. Unlike the songs on *John Wesley Harding*, almost none of which have formal choruses, the songs from this session use the device of a chorus with a great deal of imagination; with so much imagination, in fact that the choruses often do not have a logical relationship to the verses. The relationship is often one of mood, or, simply, of dramatic impact. Richard Manuel is extremely effective on some of the choruses, especially on "I Shall Be Released."

The Basement Tape is anything but unique; it's rather a serendipitous version of what goes on at Dylan's house and at Big Pink any day of the week. "There're lots more," said one member of the Band. "They're just for fun." For after all, making music, writing songs, changing the old

wanted a live album, and apparently so did Bob, but disagreements over what songs were to be included doomed the project. The LP did reach the acetate stage, however (Job No. 77110), and the list of cuts seems to indicate that Columbia was trying to capitalize on Dylan's new fame as "the conscience of the nation's youth," while Dylan may, by this time, have become disillusioned with singing songs "written for other people." The album itself is not all that impressive, mostly due to the poor programming, for much of Dylan's weaker material was included: "When the Ship Comes In," "John Brown" (a bitter war story about a kid with a patriotic mother who doesn't recognize her boy when he returns home from the battlefield, mutilated and shattered; a theme taken from many resentful Irish songs about English conscription), and the anti-boxing pure-protest grind-it-out guilt-cruncher, "Who Killed Davey Moore?"

The LP opens with what Columbia calls "Poem To Woody." "Woodie Guthrie is really something more than a folksinger," Dylan says, introducing his poem. "And this is called 'Last Thoughts On Woody Guthrie.'" That chilling title leads into a long, stream of consciousness reading, very simply the story of a boy looking for himself, down the road, on the street, in the fields. Somehow, Bob is saying, Guthrie was a companion on that road, in the "trash can alleys."

Then Dylan moves into a compelling "Lay Down Your Weary Tune," and then lets loose with a rare song, "Dusty Old Fairgrounds," a charming number about carnivals and arcades, perhaps a memory of the annual Minnesota State Fair, always an important day for a town like Hibbing. After the three cuts mentioned in the paragraph above comes "Percy's Song." A friend has been involved in a fatal accident, sentenced to 99 years in Joliet Prison, and the singer meets with the judge to plead for a lesser sentence. The judge, inevitably, orders the young man from his chambers, and there is nothing to be done. "I played my guitar through the night and the day/ But all it could play was the cold, the cruel, rain and the wind." It is a musician's song of stolen friendship. The Fairport Convention performs the composition on their new *A&M LP, Unhalfbricking*.

Then comes "Bob Dylan's New Orleans Rag," and the LP closes with "Seven Curses," a brilliant song in the old English manner, with an appropriately dramatic melody. In mood, the number is not all that different from Joan Baez' magnificent "Matty Groves" from her *In Concert* LP. Dylan sings of a horse thief who can escape death if he allows the judge a night with his daughter. He refuses, but the girl insists. The deal is made and the deed is done — and the hanging takes place. The daughter hurls seven curses on the judge: "... that five walls cannot hide him; that six diggers cannot bury him; and that seven deaths will never kill him." Dylan's timing in the delivery of these verses is extraordinary, and the song provides a chilling, desperate close to the album.

[LIVE PERFORMANCES — "I EXPOSE MYSELF EVERY TIME I GO OUT ON THE STAGE"]
Dylan's first live recordings appeared in 1963, on Vanguard and Broadside Records — and while Columbia and Leacock-Pennabaker have recorded reels and reels of live material, only one cut of it has even been released. There are, of course, the movie "soundtracks," which some have taped: *Don't Look Back*, with its brilliant, shining hotel-room "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue"; *Festival*, showcasing Dylan's first electric performance with pieces of Paul Butterfield's band ("Maggie's Farm" was included in the film — "Tombsone P'es" and "Like a Rolling Stone" remain in the can); the film shot and the sound recorded for the movie to be made of the Guthrie Memorial Program, at which Dylan and the Band recorded "Mrs. Roosevelt," "Grand Coluée," and "Ain't Got No Home"; and the completed and unreleased film of Dylan's 1966 tour of Europe with the Hawks. The tapes made by Dylan's appearance at the Isle of Wight have been killed.

Dylan's earliest live recordings are of mostly academic interest. They include two LPs made from the Newport Folk Festival, 1963: *Evening Concerts at Newport*, Vol. I, 1963, Vanguard VSD 79143 (Dylan sings "Blowin' In the Wind") and *Newport Broadside* (Topical Songs), Vanguard VSD 79144 (Dylan sings "Playboys and Playgirls" with Pete Seeger, "Blowin' in the Wind" again with the whole gang). Dylan also appeared at the 1963 March On Washington, singing "A Pawn in Their Game," which was preserved on the Broadside LP that commemorated the event: *We Shall Overcome*, BR-592.

Then in 1964 Columbia recorded Bob's first solo concert at Carnegie Hall. They

Later that same year Columbia recorded Dylan's Halloween concert in New York City — 17 songs, four with Joan Baez. The performances are not all that different from the studio recordings on the same tunes, with the exception of the show-stopping "If You Gotta Go, Go Now" and the performance of the unreleased "Mama/Daddy You Been On My Mind," with Joan. The concert is refreshing; it reminds one that Dylan was able to take his songs far less seriously than much of his audience. "This is a sacrilegious lullaby in G-minor," he says, introducing "The Gates of Eden." And later, that classic line: "Well, hope you're all having a good time... it's Halloween, and uh, I've got my Bob Dylan mask on."

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—Continued



With the Hawks, 1965

JIM MARSHALL

Continued

Fade to 1966. "Like A Rolling Stone" has hit the top of the charts, and Columbia is pressing for another hit. "Positively Fourth Street" is successful, "Crawl Out" flops, "One of Us Must Know," though one of Dylan's best records, flops, and finally they score with "Rainy Day Women No. 12 & 35." And then, just before the release of *Blonde on Blonde*, comes the pretty, bouncy "I Want You." Those who thought it got a surprise; on the flip of Columbia 4-43683 was "Just Like Tom Thumb," five minutes and thirty-six seconds of tearing, devastating hard rock. Where was the rest of the concert, the rest of that long tour of Europe? Tapes of a performance in Dublin have leaked out, the acoustic part of the show only—"Desolation Row," "Visions of Johanna," "Just Like A Woman," and others, with blazing harp work; but of Bob Dylan and the Hawks, only their numbers are available outside of Columbia's vaults, Pennabaker's files, and Dylan's own collection.

[WHEN THE CIRCUS WAS IN TOWN]

Bob Dylan and the Hawks. They were, without exception or qualifications, the finest rock and roll band I have ever seen or heard. If you weren't there it will be difficult to convey the visual power of their performances. There were Bob and Robbie Robertson, like twins on the stage, charging each other for the solos, their fingers only inches apart; Rick Danko, puffing out his cheeks and bending his body deep, dancing through the cables and wires; Garth Hudson and Richard Manuel, each off to one side of the stage, sitting back and making sounds one might have thought came from the guitarists, simply because one could not take his eyes off them; and Mickey Johns or Bobby Greg, sitting high above it all, holding it together, never missing.

The sound they produced was stately, extravagant, and visionary—there is nothing with which to compare it in all of Dylan's recordings. At the bottom of that sound was a rough, jerking marriage of blues and honky tonk, but over that were grafted the sorts of echoes that come from the music box of a circus merry-go-round: the fire and ice of Garth Hudson's organ and the young, brash clinches of Robbie Robertson's guitar. And it was loud, louder than anyone played in those days, but so musical and so melodic that the band could dance free and their audiences easily went with them.

There was an urgency to those performances, an urgency that is captured in the three recordings that have filtered out of New York City. It's certainly

BOB DYLAN

Rainy Day Woman
Bob Dylan's Blues
Pledging My Time
Can You Please Crawl Out
Your Window?

EP 6286



New Hits



there on "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," the single that is at least available in Europe (CBS 2258b). Dylan's voice is tired, raspy, but even at the end of an endless tour he wouldn't quit. The music and the phrasing are nothing like the version on *Highway 61 Revisited*, and the real stars are Hudson and Robertson, Garth soloing weirdly in between the lines, Robbie punching notes in and out of Bob's shouts and screams until there is no separation between the singer and the musicians: "And picking up ayn-gel/Who just arrrrrryyved here/BAM/From the cohhhhhhst/Who looked so fiiline at firstbutleftlooking/Just... like a ghohhhhhhst! Yeah." And then Robertson and Hudson are into the break, so fast they literally have to slow down the tempo in order to catch the last verse. It's a stunning performance.

Probably recorded the same night was "One Too Many Mornings," which has surfaced on a tape of professional quality. It is almost pure honky-tonk in its structure, with Dylan rushing the verses,

stretching out his vowels more than he ever did on record. Danko and Manuel join him on the choruses, lending a high, moaning dimension to the song that it hasn't known before or since. "Just one too many mornings/And a thousand/myles/BA-DA-DA-DUMP-DA-DUMP/BE-HIND." There is virtually no resemblance between this performance and the soft, sorrowful ballad of years before. Dylan sings it almost as if it was a memory that belonged to someone else.

And then, finally and ultimately, there is "Like A Rolling Stone"—Dylan's greatest song, and on this tape, in my opinion, his greatest recording. The performance lasts a full nine minutes.

The Hawks—and especially Robbie Robertson—brought out something in Dylan that allowed him to project, and to reach his audiences, in a way that he had never done before. "If I told you what our music was really about we'd probably all get arrested," he said to an interviewer in 1965. More than just sound, the Hawks gave Dylan the dra-

matic back-drop he needed to step all the way and sing. He did it, then, night after night, all over the world. It was glorious—Dylan was a triumphant rock and roll star in a manner that will not be repeated. The parallel, visually, and in its musical excitement, was Elvis Presley. The Hawks made it possible—because Dylan could be sure it was all there without looking over his shoulder.

"Like A Rolling Stone" would be the last encore. The three guitarists would turn their backs on the audience and face the drummer; he'd raise his stick above his head and bring it down with the crash of a cannon shot. Bob would leap into the air and the three of them would hit the first note just as he hit the ground; instantly, they'd have it all. On the live tape the song is slowed down greatly from the recorded version, giving Bob more space in which to sing, more room for those long, stretched-out phrases and the shouts that end each line. It opens with that gunshot and rises immediately with a riot of sounds and colors, with Garth Hudson playing as if he's standing on one key of his organ, shooting out a scream that is constant throughout the nine minutes. The key to the performance is Robbie Robertson—he hits the toughest, hardest note imaginable at the beginning of every other phrase, signaling the changes and setting up Dylan for every image that's shouted into the microphone. The song moves up and down with Robertson's rhythm, fading and returning: "They used to be/Briiiiiinnng!/Sohhh amused/Baaaaah/With Napoleon in rags/Briiiiiinnng!" Robertson cuts each line in half and doubles its impact, like the "mathematical guitar genius" Dylan said he was.

But in the end the performance belongs to Bob. Burning his lines with a power he had only suggested on record, he pulls his way to the climax: "You better take your diamond ring down and/PAWN IT/BABE!!!" Dylan crashes it down and then fades while Robbie solos for a verse, letting it out until the band is ready to end it. Printed below is the end of that; of the song, the concert, and the high point of Bob Dylan's career, the way he sang it that night in Liverpool:

How does it feel?
Ahhhhhh, How does it feel?
To be on your own?
With No Direction! HOME?
LIKE A COMPLETE UN-
KNOWN?
LIKE A ROLLING STONE!