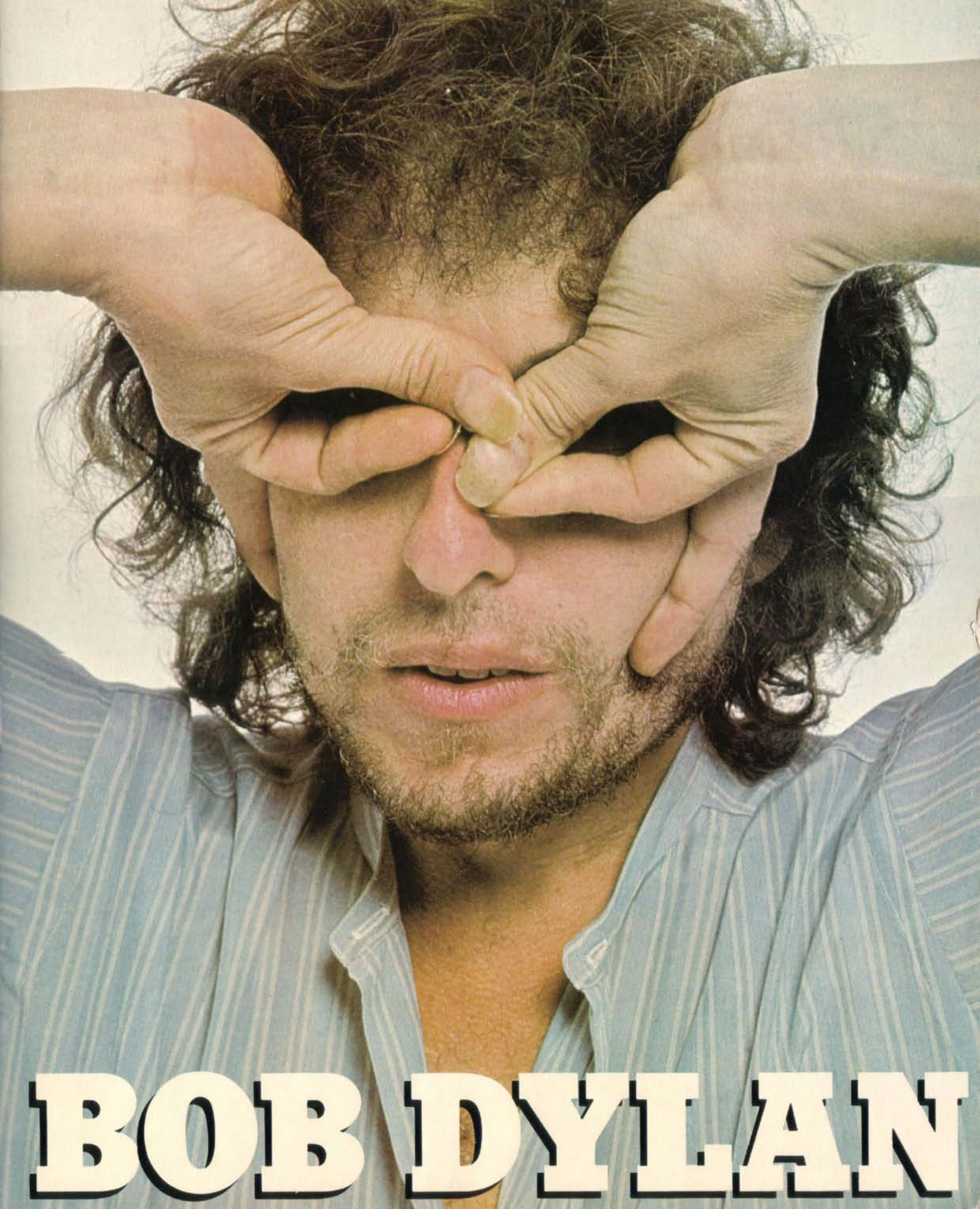




BOB DYLAN





FRENCH FRIES

small	50
medium	90
large	175









Dylan The Eye Of The Hurricane

It's a humid July night in Greenwich Village, and the regulars are all lined up at the bar. Just two more drinks then home to bed. All of a sudden, in walks a scruffy looking Bob Dylan. He's unshaven, a bit unkempt in his leather jacket and striped polo shirt. The toll of a couple of sleepless nights is reflected in his intense eyes. He plops down on a barstool and orders a Tequila Gold. Immediately, a circle of people forms around him, as he begins to talk. "We just finished a new song, listen to this," and he pulls out a typewritten paper and recites a strange, compelling tale of love and redemption and collaborations:

"I married Isis on the fifth day of May
But I could not hold on to her very long
So I cut off my hair and I rode
straight away
For the wild unknown country where
I could not go wrong."

The recitation went on for five minutes then a stunned silence. After the power of the verses seeped through, the reactions were wild. Acclaim from all around. Dylan smiled, leaned back, ordered another drink. This time double.

Another story of the sixties, with Dylan the street poet, hanging out in the Village, gobbling up raw sensory experience then spewing it out into anthems for our generation. No, this isn't 1962, this time it happens to be 1975. At the Other End, the bar where Dylan and his friends hung out, drank and cavorted till the wee hours that summer night, living on rock 'n' roll time, singing the songs that Dylan and co-author Jacques Levy had recently penned and which would later that year appear on Dylan's most recent album *Desire*.

Although the scene could've been '62, this is the '75 Dylan, alive, creating, touring, a geyser of poetry, a beacon of truth shining through those hot nights, New Jersey and otherwise. Dylan is back, as if he'd never gone, and once again, he's at the top.

Survival, that's a key word when describing the career of the Minnesota Kid. He's been in the limelight for over a decade now, surviving long after most rock names echo like dead ghosts down Tin Pan Alley. But it's been a long climb too, from sleeping in crash pads in what is now more fashionably known as East Village, to today anticipating gold records before they are shipped. Dylan, real name Bob Zimmerman, blew into the Village in the early sixties, scuffed a bit, played a few coffeehouses, then got his big break opening for John Lee Hooker at Mike Porco's Gerde's Folk City. Porco was instrumental in launching Bob's career, fathering this innocent looking immigrant to the Apple, actually taking him uplows and laying out the money for a cabaret card. At the Gerde's date, Bob drew the attention of Robert Shelton, a N.Y. Times reporter who subsequently wrote a rave review of Dylan's performance which was reprinted on the back of his first album. After doing a few studio dates, including sessions with Joe Williams, Victoria Spivey and Harry Belafonte, Dylan was signed to Columbia Records by John Hammond, the legendary A&R man whose credits could fill a whole page.

Dylan's first album—simply titled *Bob Dylan*—was mostly a traditional folk/blues effort with only two original songs. But by 1963 Dylan was literally mass producing songs and gaining a wide reputation in the Village among other artists such as Dave Van Ronk, Peter, Paul and Mary, Pete Seeger, and Joan Baez. It was Baez who adopted this ragamuffin minstrel, adding him as a special guest to her sold out concerts. By then, Bob's *Blowing in the Wind*, recorded by over fifty people but popularized by Peter, Paul and Mary, had become an anthem of the growing protest movement.

Dylan seemed to feed right into that

movement, producing some of the finest topical songs ever written, numbers like *Hattie Carroll*, *Masters of War*, and *A Hard Rain Is Gonna Fall*. However, by 1964, the artist in Dylan seemed to get restless and with the release of his fourth album *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, it was evident that his message had far exceeded the fairly rigid formula of then popular music.

By 1965 Dylan was ready to give birth to a new sound that totally revolutionized the entire music scene and turned most of the old Moon June Spoon publishing offices into premature tombs. With *Bringing It All Back Home*, Dylan single-handedly created folk rock. And in the mid-sixties it was America's predominant form of musical expression. Aided by his friends, like Roger McGuinn of the late great Byrds and Manfred Mann, who both did cover versions of Dylan songs that shot into the top ten, Bob became, in critic Ralph Gleason's words, "the first poet of the jukebox." In an amazingly productive period from 1965-66, Dylan released three classic albums, *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Highway 61 Revisited*, and, what is easily one of the finest rock albums ever produced, *Blonde on Blonde*. At this point, Bob Dylan was at a dizzying height in popularity. This frail little man with the soft-spoken, retiring manner, was a giant that roared in a way that no one else in America could match. He was their leader.

But then tragedy struck. At the peak of his career, right on the heels of his two smash singles *Like A Rolling Stone* and *Positively Fourth St.*, and in the middle of a torrid, two continent tour, fate lifted its fickle finger. It happened late one rainy night on an old dirt road near Woodstock, New York. Bob left a party, hopped aboard his motorcycle and was motoring home. Following in a car were his wife Sara, and his manager Albert Grossman. Suddenly, a swerve, perhaps a rock fragment on the road, and Dylan woke up in an upstate New York hospital, with several cracked vertebrae.

Perhaps it was an omen. Perhaps the breakneck speed of the previous years had taken its toll. Literally. At any rate, for Dylan it was a time to reassess his career and remix his life. He raised a family, lived in seclusion, and for the most part was silent until an enigmatic album of Biblical-inspired parable songs released in 1969 and titled *John Wesley Harding*, signalled the re-emergence. And then, during the height of the student rebellion and ahead of his time as ever he released *Nashville Skyline*, an album of pure country and rockabilly tunes. By the early seventies Dylan was beginning to return to his roots. He wrote a protest song for George Jackson, the black activist slain in prison, and performed at the historic Bangladesh concert.

Bob is not an easy man to follow. On that hot July night in the summer of '75, even long time Village impresario and Other End owner Paul Colby was confused by that strange new poem "Isis." "I was befuddled. I thought 'What the hell is this?' He was just dictating this thing, it didn't sound like the kind of song he would do. It threw me off, I just looked blankly at him. But after I saw him do it live in Plymouth it flabbergasted me. Now, with the music, it's one of the highlights of the new album. I learned just to accept him. I don't argue with geniuses."

And we've all learned to accept it, accept it with pride. For Dylan is always in the cultural forefront writing about things that most of us will come to understand one or two years later. The Rolling Thunder Revue is typical of this. Dylan sharing a stage with greats and soon-to-be greats alike. The whole idea for the whirlwind, six week tour of small Northeastern halls came one night at the Other End when Dylan, Jacques Levy and long-time friend and general music scene body Bob Neuwirth conspired to put together a package that

would blow into a town, pick up whatever local talent was around, and play a relaxed, almost circus-atmosphere concert. Dylan called Baez, Ronnee Blakely jammed one night in New York and was added, McGuinn fell into the bar one night and joined, it was that impromptu. Using the nucleus of the band that had just recorded on *Desire*, Rob Stoner on bass, Howie Wyeth on drums, Scarlett Rivera on violin, Luther Rix on percussion, Dylan and the entourage left New York for Plymouth, Massachusetts in late October. Mick Ronson joined and so did Steve Soles, an L.A. singer-songwriter.

Onstage, it was like a carnival. Neuwirth and the back up band, self-named Guam, warmed up the audience. Next Dylan ambled on to do about five songs. After intermission, the curtain rose to an incredible sight, Bob and Joan, together again after these years. After a few numbers, Baez took center stage for a dynamic six song set, followed by a solo set from Bob. Then he was joined by the band for a few numbers, and the finale. *This Land Is Your Land*, featuring everyone on stage from Allen Ginsberg to Bob's mother Beattie one night. The spirit was so amazingly warm that when Joni Mitchell flew in to play one concert, she wound up staying for the remaining three weeks of the tour. And it all came to a dramatic finale December 8th in Madison Square Garden where, with the help of Muhammed Ali, Roberta Flack and 14,000 screaming partisans, Dylan performed a benefit concert for imprisoned boxer and Dylan's latest cause, Rubin Carter.

The tour itself earned terrific acclaim. McGuinn enthused, "I've never done anything better in my life. The tour was indescribable. It was the greatest high I've ever done, 'cause it was on the ranch." Baez too loved working with Dylan again and, since I was the only reporter allowed on tour, told me "The music is great. Bobby went out of his way to make everyone feel comfortable by sharing time and so on. It's exciting to sing with him and it's always a challenge."

With his brand new album, Dylan is once again paving the road for the rest of the musical world to dance down. It's a mature album, reflecting the concerns of an aware 35-year-old family man. But also one who refuses to turn his back on the real world, the world of shootouts in Little Italy and frame-ups in New Jersey. Of course, we're speaking of "Joey" and "Hurricane," two songs that do most to reflect the spirit of Dylan's social awareness. Dylan seems to admire the self-made man, being one himself, and seems drawn to those that reflect the Horatio Alger script. Like Joey Gallo and Rubin Carter. Gallo, the Italian businessman, from Red Hook, Brooklyn to "king of the streets," where he was slain.

Hurricane, the smash single, is an ode to a courageous black boxer, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who was framed for a motiveless, triple murder rap because he had been defending the civil rights of black people. Rubin, a blunt outspoken man, lacked the boyish charm of an Ali, and was felt to be a threat. Hence his incarceration. Dylan documents this miscarriage of justice in an eight-minute rocker that instructs us to be ashamed to "live in a land where justice is a game" while "Rubin sits like Buddha in his eight-foot cell, an innocent man in a living hell."

Dylan first became aware of Rubin's plight last summer and, after two visits to him in Trenton State Prison, conceived the idea for a song that "had priority in my mind." So he sat down with Jacques Levy, the off-off-Broadway director, and they knocked out the very theatrical *Hurricane*, which seems to be made up of stage directions.

While writing the book on the Dylan tour, *The Million Dollar Bash: On the Road*

with Bob Dylan and the Rolling Thunder Revue," Bob described to me those visits with Hurricane.

"We met in the library and we were there for most of the day as far as I can remember. We got there in the morning and left when it was dark. We talked about a lot of things. I had just come back from overseas. Actually, it was the first time that I had really talked much with anybody. The first time I saw him I left knowing one thing, that this man's philosophy and my philosophy were running on the same road, and you don't meet too many people like that."

I think that this friendship has had an indirect effect on Dylan. It has liberated him. I've never seen Bob so loose and dynamic, both onstage and off. His writing is at its peak now and a lot of the spirit of the latest tour has to be credited to Rubin. This guy spent eight years in the hole and never gave up hope. In fact, it was after eight years that he began to reach out to people, he never retreated. That weighed heavily on Bob's mind, and he went out and did his best tour ever, really reaching the people. And every night, he sung the hell out of Hurricane.

Rubin, for his part, was thrilled by the songs. "There've been many, many songs and monuments written and erected for people after they were dead but the fact that this man Dylan, a man of his magnitude, with his celebrity and his understanding, for him to do this for me when I was alive, where I can enjoy it, where I know that somebody feels about me the way that he feels about me, I mean that just makes me feel proud, man. That makes me feel good. But he's the kind of people I'm talking about that come up here, talk, and end up really wanting to help, but none of them would want to help anybody unless that person's willing to help himself, and that's beautiful as far as I'm concerned. Rubin went on to say how Dylan's earlier work had affected him, while in jail. "He's got one song that I really like and listen to constantly: *It's All Right Ma, I'm Only Bleeding*. I like that. I don't talk to many people in here but when he sent me that album, I called some young guys to my cell. I told them to listen. See, we have a lot of people in here that are maintained in their minds, their thinking is incorrect, they love their enemies and hate their friends. They hate each other, and I said to them, 'Listen, this is a white man talking here. Listen to what he's saying about you. He knows more about you than you know about yourself.' So when Bob was here I was telling him, 'Bob, let me tell you something my Lord, you are a 16 cylinder man operating on 4 cylinders! Because black people don't even know who he is and that is a shame, that is a sin. They'd rather listen to some honky talk than listen to the truth. If this man Dylan could get to all the people, if people could be educated to this man, Dylan could travel on all 16 cylinders. Whew!"

"That song *Hurricane* really inspired me. I said to myself, Rubin, man, keep on pushing, 'cause you got to be doing something right, you got good people like Bob coming to try and help you out."

Apart from the social commentary, *Desire*'s main theme is the special relationship between man and woman that sometimes results in the institution we call marriage, which Canadian poet and songwriter Leonard Cohen calls, "the hottest furnace of the spirit today." Dylan and Cohen are two of the songwriters who deal directly and honestly with delicate themes. To Dylan, marriage is a quest, a search. In *Isis*, he goes through a long mystical search after he leaves the woman he "could not hold on to," a search that leads him to such exotic places as the pyramids and empty tombs. Finally he heads back to his woman, his Isis:

"I came in from the east with the sun in my eyes
I cursed her one time when I rode on ahead
She said, 'Where have you been?'
I said, 'No place, special'
She said, 'You look different'
I said, 'Well, I guess'
She said, 'You've been gone'
I said, 'That's only natural'
She said, 'You gonna stay'
I said, 'If you want me to, yes'
That's the eternal dialogue of marriage."

There's another beautifully haunting song about marriage on the album, this one much more direct. *Sara* is a hymn to his lovely wife of ten years. And it's an incredibly honest song, exposing the problems as well as the strengths of their mystical bonds. Bob recollects family scenes on the beach, watching their children grow up, then flashes back to memories of travels with Sara, living in Woodstock, and then in perhaps the most revealing and finest verse he's ever written, recollects those electrifying days of the *Blonde* period:

"I can still hear those Methodist Bells
I had taken the cure, had just gotten through
Staying up for days in the Chelsea Hotel
Writing Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands for you"

For him Sara is a "radiant jewel," a "mystical wife," and he even refers to her feminine intuition and spirit, describing her as a "Scorpio Sphinx in a calico dress," who "must forgive me my unworthiness."

The rest of the album is just as hauntingly beautiful. *Oh Sister* is a gypsy-like plea for sisterhood and brotherhood, and the murky *One More Cup of Coffee*, which sounds like *Maggie's Farm* revisited, comes across like a religious ode. CBS Records executive Jerry Wexler said about the Middle Eastern quality to the music on *Desire*: "Dylan's singing on this album is cantorial. I'm incredibly happy that Dylan has opened himself up to human interchange. There's a joyousness and happiness about him now that's infectious. The recent Rolling Thunder Tour has achieved the unfettered joy of rock 'n' roll like never before. And Dylan's new songs, they're so incredibly direct. You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows now."

So with a highly successful Rolling Thunder tour, at least Tour One, behind him, and with a Number One album under his belt, what can we expect now from the Minnesota Kid? Another few years of self-imposed exile? A retreat from the new rock to a more cautious form of music like country? All indications from Bob and his close friends tell us that he will stay out there, in the open, living on the edge, then coming back to the center to relate those experiences to the rest of us. He is the seer, the shaman, the magic man whose role is to document those inner fears and quirks, the magical triumphs and delights. He's a poet, a prophet, and an incredible artist. But he was also born to rock 'n' roll. He continues to rock on. And in the process stays forever young.

Larry Sloman

1 & 2 © 1975 Ram's Horn Music

Shelter From The Critics' Storm

So for one night, everybody became a television critic. With a mind filled with false ideas, images, and distorted facts, the United States of America tuned into NBC on the fourteenth of September to snatch a look at the man who *TV Guide*—that ultimate arbiter of cultural direction—called the "single biggest cultural influence on millions in his own generation." A man whose impact was rumored to be even more powerful than that of Mary Tyler Moore. A man who sold more records than

Tony Orlando, even. A man whose social commentary was allegedly more incisive than that of Mary Hartman. Mary Hartman.

This isn't Superman we're talking about. It is a Jewish man in his mid-thirties who hails from a little Minnesota town, one of those Midwestern towns that spawn television heroes like Johnny Carson, John Davidson, and Chad Everett. But Bob Dylan never took to the tube like those luminaries; always a recluse, Bob Dylan, Single Biggest Cultural Influence, had never starred in a television special of his own. So when he finally did, people expected more than the usual affair. They wanted Superman.

And they were bitterly disappointed. *Hard Rain*, the official Bob Dylan television special, gave them an hour-long abridgement of a rain-drenched stadium concert in Fort Collins, Colorado. So far so good. But the songs, the arrangements, the camera angles, the manner of presentation, and the parts left out seemed to give everybody something to complain about.

He didn't even talk! The songs were too intense for television! His *Rolling Thunder* band all looked like Arabs—with those turbans and all! He didn't even wash up before the concert! The band sounded like they never had been rehearsed! Dylan should never play lead guitar!

Others proclaimed it boring and shut it off, in mind if not on screen.

Television, they decided, had proved Kryptonite to the Superman of popular music. Those who called themselves knowledgeable had all kinds of explanations. Why This Happened, Dylan had misunderstood the nature of television. He hadn't realized that when you are a visitor in the living room of America, you have to make small talk, keep your hands on your lap, and not make threats. He had been careless in presentation, not comprehending the medium. He had not realized that slickly-done, instantly recognizable versions—like on the records—of his songs would pacify his fans, educate the curious, and overcome the insurmountable inadequacies of home television sound. The choice of "television verite" production company TTVV had been unfortunate for an offbeat look at an establishment event, an avant-garde approach is fine, but when the event is off television's beaten track in the first place, you need middle-of-the-road production virtues. Like varied camera angles, like interviews with the fans who stood out in the hard rain for several hours, like *Rolling Thunder* and candid shots, like an intermission breakaway with civic-minded scenes of downtown Fort Collins.

Everybody had a reason for Bob Dylan's failure. Those who defended the show felt compelled to preface their remarks with a confession: "Well, I've liked Bob Dylan for a long time, everything he does is all right with me, and seeing him for free is such a treat that I don't want to complain, but..."

All of this is an insult to Bob Dylan. Not an insult to be taken seriously, though, as insults born from ignorance never are. Those who criticized the *Hard Rain* show as poor television have classified themselves as hopeless Mr. Joneses who, when confronted with nakedness, can only ask: Who is that man? And those who apologize for enjoying the show have a lot of nerve to say they're Dylan's friends. While admitting they liked the show, they still want to be on the side that's winning.

But they're misplaced. *Hard Rain* establishes once more that Bob Dylan's side wins. Hands down. It would have been very easy for Bob Dylan to stroll into a studio and churn out a mostly-musical tribute with the songs that won approval from *TV Guide*. It would have been just as easy to film and edit a *Rolling Thunder* Revue documentary that would have combined the best aspects of the critically accepted *Don't Look Back* movie and the rock

documentaries of the early seventies. But what Bob Dylan did was approach television in as iconoclastic a manner as he approaches music. In *Hard Rain* he flaunted his disdain for the Star System, for the music industry. He did it as another major musical figure has bragged. His Way. And succeeded.

What is amazing is that so few people approached the show as they have learned to approach Dylan and his albums. Surely an artist of Dylan's stature is entitled to a critical benefit of the doubt, no matter in which medium he works. And once you give Dylan this benefit, which assumes that he did things for a reason, then the aspects of *Hard Rain* begin to fall into place.

Remember, Dylan threw out a fully completed take of the special, filmed in Clearwater, Florida, because he had something specific in mind. The aired Fort Collins version was his choice. And a forceful choice it was.

Hard Rain, as we have seen, refuses to make any concessions to traditional television, and by this it is more an ultimatum than a variety hour. I'm going to do these songs, Dylan was saying, and I'm going to do them to reflect the way I feel about them now, and it is too much for you, you better listen harder. And if you don't get the point, I'm going to push your face in it by pushing my face into the television screen.

To emphasize this, the *Rolling Thunder* Revue, Dylan in particular, dressed up like a band of North African terrorists. And terrorists they were: they had hijacked an hour of network television time, and were going to use it to give the public a 60-minute dose of truth seldom revealed on television.

And what truth was revealed! The logic of his presentation was defined by the fury of his opener, "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall," a song first recorded 14 years ago. In its original version, Dylan soloed, a poet-prophet who stood alone and tried to warn the world of imminent disaster. As it turned out, not enough people listened, so in this 1976 version, he cranked up the sound, gave the music an apocalyptic feel, and featured a chorus of half-burnt-out survivors of the generation that lived under the clouds of that inevitable *Hard Rain*. The song threatened to end prematurely several times, but each time Dylan restarted the band, once again shouted the words in hoarse factuality. Black is still the color! None is still the number! The chaos of the music—in this song and throughout the concert—reflected the chaos of the world, the deepening gyre of disaster in which the world has been spiraling since Dylan first warned us.

And so it went throughout the hour. The monotony of the close-up shots pounded the viewers with the monotony of an endless drizzle. There was no shelter from the storm, not even in the parts of the show where Dylan cheek-to-cheeked it with also-turbanned Joan Baez, who looked like a kidnapped Helen enjoying her wanton captivity in the hands of ragged Trojans. Those "acoustic" parts delved into the post-movement themes of deportees and immigrants, all delivered in a rocky-staccato manner, more of a challenge than a rallying cry.

Perhaps the most paradigmatic aspect of the show was Dylan's lead guitar playing. There is no doubt that he is technically inferior to Mick Ronson, the Revue's usual lead guitarist, and in fact is not a particularly proficient single-note player by any standard. But his use of lead guitar as his solo non-voice instrument (there was no harmonica playing in *Hard Rain*—the voice of the folksinger silenced for good) underlined the topsy-turvy aspect of the show, of the music, of the world. The first

had become the last, as Dylan played those off-timing bottleneck runs in *Maggie's Farm*, the cry of a wounded animal was sounded. A cry that jibed perfectly

with the lyrics of the song, at a time when millions of Americans—striking union members and fed-up presidential non-voters—are refusing to work on *Maggie's Farm*: "You sing while you slave and I just get bored."

Of course, the closing anthem of *Hard Rain* had to be *Idiot Winds*. And here, Dylan was at his best, his voice swirling and howling over the crunch-thump hurricane of the *Rolling Thunder*. Significantly, he warned the second-person of the song—in this case, the American public—that one day you'll be in the grave (not, as first sung, the ditch), and those flies buzzing around your eyes will be a fitting tribute to the uselessness of your television lies, of your *People Magazine* sensibilities.

And that was the triumph of *Hard Rain*. In a world of Beautiful People, Dylan could have been the crown prince, but he threw it all away to remain outside the law. He looked ugly, sang ugly, and played ugly because he wanted us to listen, not to admire. If you dared to listen, he took your breath away, and you hardly had a chance to regain it (during the commercial breaks, maybe) because he was then into another song. Eleven songs in an hour he did, because he had a lot to say and there wasn't much time. But it was enough time to get the full impact of a poet who didn't die in the gutter, a clown fed up with crying in the alley, a talker whose tongue is still not broken. We have heard the sound of *Rolling Thunder*, and it has cried out a warning.

Steven Levy
Free Times
Philadelphia, Pa.
Sept. 24, 1976

Tribute To Bob Dylan Set On Campus Tomorrow

A tribute to Bob Dylan, looking at his achievements from today's perspective, will be held tomorrow on the University of California campus.

It will present films, slides, recordings, and tapes documenting Dylan's life and performance practices and illustrating the development of the form and idiom of Dylan's writing against the social and musical context of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Symposium: *Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man: A Tribute to Bob Dylan*, will take place in 160 Kroeber Hall from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$20.

John McDonough, freelance writer, music critic, and San Francisco correspondent for "Billboard," will be the coordinator for the program, sponsored by UC Extension.

McDonough, who co-authored a tune on Box Seagulls' most recent album, will play and sing some of Dylan's tunes during the day. Photos and slides by Bay Area photographers Daniel Tehany and Michael Zagaris will be featured.

Dylan will be viewed in his various roles—singer, performer, songwriter, poet, social force, 20th Century romantic.

His brand of surrealism, including the relation between drugs and writing, will be highlighted by a comparison of *Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man* with Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*.

Berkeley, Calif. Gazette
November 8, 1974

Bob Dylan: Ballads Of Our Times

There are few healthier signs of our times than that many of our young people heed and respect the grim pessimism of Bob Dylan. This drawn and weary balladeer writes songs as timely and as real as the gunshot that murdered Medgar Evers or the poverty that drove Hollis Brown to destroy his wife, his five children and himself.

Dylan is becoming a one-young-man Grecian chorus chanting of our sins of pride and prejudice and warning that the gods have struck down men for less—if there are any gods, of course. Dylan seems, in his gloomy cynicism, even to question the validity of such a comforting notion.

His latest album, *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (Columbia, CL 2105), is his most direct statement thus far. And as such, without any catchy songs such as *Blowin' in the Wind* or *Don't Think Twice, It's All Right* to lighten it, it poses the sternest challenge to the loyalty of the following that has made Dylan the most successful serious young performer-composer in folk music.

These 10 ballads indict our times and attitudes in a blunt bill of particulars charging us with hypocrisy, injustice, cruelty, discrimination, prejudice, jingoism and, perhaps worst of all, indifference. The accusations are leveled in the best ballads Dylan has written yet, blunt and barren narratives that build inevitably to their tragedies in the best balladic tradition.

Dylan's style, admittedly, isn't easy to take for someone who is accustomed to pop singing, especially of the folkum variety. His voice is flat, nasal and limited in range, and he has confined his guitar and harmonica accompaniment to skeletal chording or a raw country blues framework. But he has style, unmistakably his own and ideally suited to his raw, outspoken material.

Some may question his right to set himself up as a conscience of society. After all, he's only 21 or so, with not much more than a high school education, and he dresses like a beatnik. But really, what other credentials does he need than talent, sensitivity, the gift of poetry, and the validity of his judgments—by these criteria, he more than justifies his right to be heard.

His ballad, *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll*, is hardly more than simple reporting of a Maryland killing. Mrs. Carroll, a middle-aged Negro mother of 11 who was working as a barmaid, was canonically last year by the burly son of an influential white family because he felt she had not served him quickly enough. The wheels of Maryland justice spun and William Zantinger was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to six months in jail. It would be difficult to achieve greater impact in reporting this story than Dylan has done with his plain ballad.

The tragedy of *The Ballad of Hollis Brown* is in the meaninglessness of it and the seeming indifference of god and man to Brown's insurmountable poverty. After the poor South Dakota farmer has slaughtered his family and himself, Dylan finds the ideal line to emphasize the awful absurdity of the deaths: "Somewhere in the distance, there's seven new people born..."

These two ballads are the best among 45 minutes of fine listening. But others—particularly *North Country Blues*, *With God on Our Side* and *Only a Pawn in Their Game*—are excellent Dylan, too.

Joseph Haas
Chicago, Ill. News
Mar. 7, 1964

Dylan's "Father" Is Still Just Folks

Twenty-five years is a long time to spend in one vicinity. As of this October, Mike Porco, the "dean of Folk City," will have been

operating establishments in the Greenwich Village area for nearly a quarter of a century.

The last few years have not been easy for Porco. His folk music enclave has come upon hard times and Mike has been faced with rising costs and diminishing returns.

Art D'Luogoff, owner of the Village Gate, is another survivor with 20 years of business experience in the Village. D'Luogoff respects Mike's perseverance and ear for talent. "Mike has always taken an active interest in new young artists," he said. "He has cut out an important niche in the folk music business. Many of today's top artists owe their start to working at Mike Porco's Folk City. Besides, he's a hell of a nice guy."

Nice guys aren't always first in the hearts of those who have received a helping hand. While it is true that Jose Feliciano, Anita Sheer, David Bromberg, the late Phil Ochs and other artists have returned to play Folk City after establishing themselves "commercially," many others used the club as a point of departure and have not been back.

Still, the club is a songwriters' hangout and has been since its inception. "Folk City has been a home for me for five years," songwriter and RCA recording artist Tom Pacheco said with a smile. "Mike has been like a father, and I've written a lot of songs from the inspiration and vibes from that place. I hope it goes on forever and I hope Mike goes on longer."

Folkies' Father Figure

Mike Porco has been a father figure to a number of folk musicians. Of all those who have learned to listen to Mike's suggestions and value his plain spoken but perceptive business acumen one artist, in particular, stands out: Bob Dylan. It was Dylan who helped put Folk City on New York's cultural map but it was Mike Porco who gave the struggling kid from Minnesota the chance no other club owner with a cabaret license would give him, a booking. Mike was subsequently dubbed by the media as "Bob Dylan's adopted father."

"When they had the Bobby Dylan-Rolling Thunder concert at the Garden last year," recalled Mike, who rarely gets out of Folk City but does receive invitations from his former proteges to see them perform on the concert stage, "I was backstage with Joni Mitchell and Richie Havens and they dragged me on stage with them. A guard stopped me and said, 'You're not allowed to go backstage.' And Richie said, 'What do you mean, we're not allowed? That's Dylan's father! Then I told him the truth, figuring he might ask for identification. So the guard says, 'How can that be Dylan's father? His name is Porco.' Then (writer) Larry Sloman said, 'That's his stepfather!'"

"Bringing It All Back Home"

The Rolling Thunder Revue made its debut on October 23, 1975—at Folk City (130 West Third St., off Sixth Ave.). The occasion was Mike Porco's birthday and the event was an eye-opening all-star hootenanny with the Thin Man, Joan Baez, Jack Elliot, Roger McGuinn, Rob Stoen, and Bobby Neuwirth representing the first Rolling Thunder caravan plus fellow musicians Phil Ochs, Eric Anderson, Bette Midler, Buzzy Linhart, Patti Smith, and George Frayne (Commander Cody). Nearly all had appeared at Folk City on the bill, during a "hoot night" or as guest performers. Bringing it all "back home" was a token of Bob Dylan's regard for his friend and mentor of many years.

It was Mike who gave the folk-rock hero his first chance to test his rough-edged songs before a paying audience as opening act for John Lee Hooker, the Detroit blues guitarist (April 11-24, 1961). Before Dylan could work professionally he had to join the musicians' union and obtain a cabaret card. Mike co-signed as Dylan's guardian for the union. He also paid the

\$2.50 for the license—and sent Dylan off to get a haircut. (In his salad days Dylan's appearance was decidedly bucolic and his hair, in a busy period, might resemble a bowl of coleslaw. Almost nobody except Mike Porco would have gotten away with the suggestion that he trim or refine any part of such a sensitive but sometimes feisty artist.)

Mike had been unaware that the four-man crew lighting the Folk City playroom for videotaping had been dispatched by Dylan to chronicle the Rolling Thunder's musical milestone. His son Angelo knew, Mike later discovered, "but not to put me wise, he said that Channel 13 was filming a documentary on the Village and they had selected our place to showcase a revue. I thought that was a good idea; a fine plug."

"Someone must have heard there were going to be celebrities and the club got a little busy. The barmaid began to cry because she was all alone and couldn't handle so many thirsty prospects, so I got behind the bar. My wife came in with her girlfriend to wish me a happy birthday. After a few minutes she said, 'Mike, somebody wants to see you!'"

"To make her happy, I went inside. I was so busy I didn't see him come in. If you're not expecting anybody you just do the work, serve the customers and pick up the money. All at once I saw this guy with a round head, and then Bobby turned around and hugged me. 'Oh, Mike—happy birthday!' he said. So," Mike chuckled, "that was nice."

At the end of an evening full of song and liquid cheer nobody wanted to go home. The fellow doing the videotaping asked to speak with Mike. Before he could pose his questions Mike inquired as to which of Channel 13's programs the evening's festivities would appear on. "The guy started to laugh," Mike declared. "'What Channel 13? We work for Bob Dylan. He wanted to give you a little surprise for your birthday!'" the fella told me."

The memory produced a broad grin from the affable Mr. Porco, who was justifiably touched by the incident. "I didn't find out until 4:30 in the morning that what we heard in our place was the first time out for the Rolling Thunder Revue," he exclaimed. "And I couldn't even go to Bobby and say thank you! The following day the papers were full of photographs of the Folk City frolics. Some were of Mike and several were of Dylan and Baez. It certainly was a tonic for the cozy but a touch dilapidated Folk City's business—and it was a sweet gesture from Bob Dylan."

Family Matters

Last year there were rumors that the musicians' hangout and former folkie tourist attraction was on the block, but that nobody was willing to meet the selling price. The ownership is not in Mike's name. The property belongs to a family corporation consisting of two brothers and two cousins, with John Porco, Mike's brother, the principal owner. Mike's interest (and ownership) has been the Stadium Restaurant on 161st St. in the Bronx, diagonally across from Yankee Stadium.

"I had waited 12 years for the Yankees to make good and they finally won the pennant, the first time since 1964," Mike, a devout baseball fan, explained. "They had rebuilt the stadium and everybody was coming around to see what it looked like. Everyone loved the place. I figured if I devoted a short time there I could make a better living than I could in the Village."

"But sure enough," he sighed, "before this year's season opened the place burned down. It was going to open in April and the restaurant fire was on February 13. The whole building burned to the ground." He cast a reproving glance in the direction of what should have been the Bronx.

"They said I could retire but I didn't have enough insurance. In the South Bronx they don't want to give you a policy," Mike

speculates that he had invested as much money on the Stadium's stemware and bar fixtures as he finally received from his insurance. "But that's if I had to buy them one by one today," he admitted.

"Being that I knew more about the Village than anyone else (in my family), I got elected to come down here and take care of this place," Mike said of the club. He was also referring to his own 25-year business relationship with the West Village community. The Porco family's first investment was the purchase of Gerde's restaurant in 1952. William Gerde was a Dutch-German restaurateur well liked by the haberdashery manufacturers who then frequented that area (11 West Third St.). They were royally fed by Gerde's excellent chef, who remained with the eatery and the Porcos after Gerde himself had departed.

Four years later the city condemned and demolished nine square city blocks (including Gerde's) and allowed Washington Square Village a place to roost in the sun.

The Porcos took the Gerde's name around the block in 1957 to 11 West Fourth St. and Mercer, just east of the Bottom Line. (A parking lot now lies on the site.) The "Folk City" was added to the Gerde's logo a couple of years later. From 1957 into 1969 Gerde's (no one called it "Folk City") served the New York "folkie" and topical songwriter contingent as a combination haven, music marketplace, social and political catalyst, occasional babysitting service and frequent mail-drop.

An undisputed majority of the most entertaining, educational and innovative musicians, songwriters and even comedians helped to transform an ordinary working-persons' bar and beanery into a showcase for talent and an incubator of ideas. Mike's first folk music booking, in late 1959, featured traditional ballad singers (although "Dirty" McCurdy also did wondrous things with weird bawdy songs). Ed McCurdy and Molly Scott. The idea worked immediately and Mike went a few steps further by booking avant-garde jazz acts like pianist Cecil Taylor (1959) and the first bona fide gospel acts since the 1940s to play in a night spot selling liquor.

Hootenanny Heaven

Ah, yes, the infamous hoots! Mike Porco pioneered hootenannies on Monday nights (they are now held on Tuesdays), when the act booked for the week had the evening off. The hoots, inaugurated at Folk City, were copied by club owners all over the country. Their purpose is to screen new talent that has never been booked professionally. Alas, Folk City is now the last remaining Manhattan club to encourage "talent" right off the street to come in and work out in the hoots. Several clubs around town have "auditions," but that is a different procedure.

This is how the hoots run now and how they were run back in the '60s: At 7 p.m. the door opens and the musicians and would-be comics line up and pick a number from a deck of cards. There is an average of 40 to 70 hopefuls, and by 8 p.m. they are off and running with three songs or 15 minutes stage-time. Songwriter Jim Eaves (SWN, June 30, 1977) runs the hoots, lights and board. The upshot is a possible booking as an opening act for a week; on weekends, if they have not been booked, they might be offered a guest set.

It doesn't happen that often, but exceptional talent has been discovered at the hoots (along with some really lousy acts that would drive *The Gong Show* berserk). Once in a while guest performers will sit in, either during hootenanny (as Steve Goodman did not too long ago) or during a regular gig. Mike remembers a clean-cut folksinger who wasn't bad but did not earn a booking about ten years ago. His name was Dave Marsh, now a well-known WCBS-TV newscaster.

"One night Doc Watson came in and

with Bill Monroe." Mike remembers. "I forget the date—it was in the old place. But I know I came in late that night, about a quarter to ten, and it took me 20 minutes to get from the front door to the kitchen."

Guest sets occur fairly often. At the old location, Josh White sat in frequently when his daughter Beverly or his son, Josh, Jr., had a booking. The Weavers would sing behind their good friend and Mike Porco's all-time favorite performer Cisco Houston. John Denver did a guest set with Mount Airy in 1973—nearly a decade after he had auditioned (at the old FC) for the Chad Mitchell Trio.

Peter Yarrow, who had been booked for two weeks at the old club in 1961, worked out with Noel Stookey and Mary Travers in the basement dressing rooms tightening material and format for what would become Peter, Paul and Mary. Asked why PP&M had opened officially at the Bitter End instead of at Folk City (although their manager, Albert Grossman, had offered Mike the act's debut) Mike said, "I can't have the same show all the time or the audience will be bored."

Folk City All-Stars

Folk City is still the best songwriters' workshop in New York City. On instinct, Mike will book songwriters who may not be great performers yet but within two years might make big label deals—David Bromberg, Paul Siebel, Garland Jeffreys, George Gerdes, and Phoebe Snow come to mind. Ms. Snow returned recently to sit in with Buzzy Linhart. Kate McGarrigle, the Roches, Elephants Memory, and Elizabeth Corrigan have all performed there a number of times.

Two years ago Mike's taste was represented by the song content and stage presentation of Raun MacKinnon, Randy Burns, Michael Federal, and Jack Hardy. Hardy is still pick of the litter, so to speak, but the current FC All-Stars also include Tom Ittondi, Rod MacDonald, John Macandoe, Lucy Holstedt, Jim Eaves, Josie Kuhn, Marla Lewis, and Willie Nininger—songwriters of tomorrow working out today. (Nininger has the debatable distinction of having penned several tunes on the last *Captain Kangaroo* album.)

Proprietor Pat Kenny of Kenny's Castaways drops into Folk City to hear Buzzy Linhart and was present for Dave Van Ronk's sold-out one-night engagement on May 23rd. Kenny commented, "Some of the acts I most admire I first heard at Folk City. It's a significant place from the standpoint of developing artists—one of probably only half a dozen clubs in town that are of any consequence to play from an artist development outlook."

Paul Dambowicz, who manages half a dozen up-and-coming musicians and formerly booked acts at the Rosebud coffeehouse on Central Park West, said that "although Folk City has passed its golden age I still discover songwriters and performers who have become my own favorites—including many with whom I have no business connections whatsoever. A good example is John Macandoe, whom I have seen improve as a performer 500% in his last two months at Folk City."

The ultimate goal for the young or relatively unexposed musicians who play Folk City is a song publishing deal, a record label contract and the chance to take the act on the road. While it is admittedly more difficult to lure industry heavies and rock journalists to Folk City than it is to the Other End, Kenny's Castaways or the cabaret circuit, performers do it because they want good audiences that listen under optimum circumstances. Unlike most other clubs, you can hear comparatively well from the FC bar.

Folk City gets better reviews for their artists than most other clubs get for their "house acts" from critics used to more comfortable rooms. One asset is that there are

no distractions—e.g. food, celebrity hunting or clothes watching. No musician who plays there for the first time believes that the management actually hears the music, but they do have good ears. Mike may be running all over the place but he doesn't miss much. And the bar help have their own set of pet songs that they request, imitate and sometimes collect on tape for home enjoyment, although none has any interest in performing (Jack Hardy, who actually considers himself a "folksinger"—and hoorah for that!—has acquired a fanatical set of regulars who appear wherever he plays. They have committed many of his songs to memory and beg for specific numbers.)

"True Life" Mural

The listening room where the tables are is unpretentious, to put it mildly. Mike does intend to install new lighting—it would be most welcome for the stage—and he may put in a drape behind the stage to help make the place more attractive. If he does install the drape it would cover one of FC's two notorious flamenco-New Year's Eve painted murals which were acquired for the present club, which has been in operation since 1969. (The current Folk City was originally Tony Pastor's—and the less said about that place the better.)

"A lot of people think I should go someplace and have my head examined," Mike said unaffectedly. "They think that mural is awful. But I think it's a very beautiful mural. The artist took that scene from true life, things that happened years ago when people got dressed up in their best clothes and went to the best places to celebrate New Year's Eve."

Mike anticipates a resurgence of tourism in the Village and hopes some of it will benefit Folk City. "This year, we're beginning to see a few strangers," he admitted with a glimmer of a smile. "In the last few years we didn't have any tourists. I haven't seen one of those sightseeing buses for many years. Okay, maybe they do still drive through the Village in the summer," he shrugged, "but they don't stop."

"Years ago, they used to come around and stop in front of the place and maybe drop off a few people here and there. I knew the guy from the Grey Line. He told me they don't even do one Village club. Now they do a different kind of tour."

Mike Porco feels he has made a contribution. "I don't think there is anyone in the folk field that never worked in Folk City. And there are very few people that made it big that we didn't have a little something to do with it."

"Today the clubs don't 'make' anybody." This is true, in the literal sense, although the clubs do help to develop an artist's image. "But," said the dean of Folk City as he opened the cash register and prepared for another night behind the bar, "we try to survive as best we can."

Linda Solomon

Soho Weekly News

New York, N.Y.

Sept. 1, 1977

'Desire' Has Them Waiting In Line

Very rarely indeed does an album come along and generate so much advance excitement as to make people actually stand in line and wait for its initial release. But such was the case last week when Bob Dylan's new album, *Desire*, made its debut in Meridian.

At that time, there were only six copies of the LP to be had in the entire city, so I'm sure you'll understand when I tell you the stock was totally depleted within a matter of minutes! But, I got mine, and there is positively no other album I would rather review this week.

Let's take this thing systematically and mention first the personnel included on this LP. Backing up Dylan we have his very fine and very tight group, "Rolling Thunder," which includes Scarlett Rivera

on violin; Bob Stoner on bass; Howie Wech on drums; and Emmylou Harris on backup vocals.

Not enough good could possibly be said about "Rolling Thunder." Each musician is a master, and together they form a backing group which, at this time, could be unsurpassed.

Ms. Rivera, whom, they say, Dylan discovered swinging down the streets of New York City with her violin case tucked under her arm (a pretty tale, but somehow a little unbelievable... have you ever been to New York City?), is a real gem of a musician. Her excellent violin playing is a perfect foil for Dylan's intricate musical passages and adds much to the overall sound.

Together Wyeth and Stone form one of the tightest rhythm sections I have ever had the pleasure to hear. Always there, matching the words that come tearing out of Dylan's mouth, this duo works together as one, the way good bass and drum teams should.

Also included on *Desire* are three guest artists on *Hurricane*: Ronnie "Nashville" Blakley and Steve Soles on backup vocals and Luther Rix on congas. I know you all have by now heard this song, which is Dylan's current single, so I'm sure I don't have to tell you what a good job this trio does.

The album itself features nine cuts, each one uniquely individual as only Dylan can pen them, and each one telling its own special story.

Although it's the last song on *Desire*, I feel that *Sara* is the most important cut included on this album. An almost complete baring of Dylan's soul (which, up to now, has been virtually unheard of), this song was written for his wife and is a beautiful diary of some of this artist's innermost thoughts. Who ever thought we'd hear Dylan admit that he wrote *Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands* for his wife, a mysterious lady we're only just beginning to see pictures of and hear about? *Sara* is a sensitive song from a sensitive artist.

In the same vein as *Hurricane* is *Joey*, a song in which Dylan succeeds in showing the gentle side, the human side of famed "bad boy" Joey Gallo. A long narrative, this is one of my favorite cuts on the album. Dylan's voice is perfect, and he is matched beautifully by Ms. Harris on the chorus.

Back to back are *Romance In Durango* and *Black Diamond Bay*. The first song has a distinct Spanish flavor and sounds as though it could have been written for "Pat Garrett And Billy The Kid." The second is a subtly amusing cut which tells a surrealistic story. Perhaps the most interesting thing about *Black Diamond Bay* is the way Dylan turns everything around at the end to have it seem as if he were actually watching the events which took place in this song on the evening news... shades of the Dylan of old.

Rounding out *Desire* are *Isis*, an ode to the woman of all women; *Mozambique* and *One More Cup Of Coffee*, two very "now" cuts written in Dylan's more current style; and *Oh, Sister*, a serious song with religious undertones.

Allen Ginsberg, co-director of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics (shades of "on-the-road" in the Fifties), who wrote the liner notes for *Desire*, tags the album Songs of Redemption. I personally do not feel that Bob Dylan has ever had to redeem himself to anyone but certainly, if in anyone's mind he has needed to, *Desire* will do the deed. A wonderful album which induces one to play it over and over and over again. *Desire* is, in my opinion, going to be a very hard album for anyone to top.

Betty Hammer

Meridian Star

Jan. 18, 1976

New Morning, Two

New Morning is too special to burden it with import. It is too alive to have to suffer the indignity of being anesthetized for dissection. It is too full of joy, magic and pure music to need to submit to the blunt probings of tedious analysis.

Listen to it, if you have to, as if you've never heard of Bob Dylan, and you will wonder who is this man who can warm you like a shot of brandy on a chill day, who can put tingles in your nerve endings with only the phantom hint of his presence, who can make you smile and nod your head and tap out rhythms with your feet as if he was right there with you in the room, who can sing you stories that give you goose pimples with their deep mystery and uncontrollable chuckles with their sweet humor, that suddenly ignites you with the kind of love and romance you thought had blown away like ashes in a world turned to cynical dust, that reassures you of the gentleness of God. Forget it's Bob Dylan and you will hear a voice that pleads simple honesty. It is still the most authoritative voice in the music of our time.

The only trouble with *New Morning* is that it's Bob Dylan's album. That's no trouble at all, of course, except that too many people let his name get between them and his music. We have become so concerned with treating every new Dylan release as an event rather than as a record that we can't really hear it over the noise we make about it. Of what use is all this lip service when it's our ears that need the exercise.

An event? They all but wrote Bob off making an event out of his last album. Did they even listen to it? *Sell Portrait* contained some of the best performances ever recorded of some of the best songs ever written. Did his critics really think they were entitled to recreate themselves in his image and then criticize him for not being like them?

And yet, as if Bob is incapable of doing anything uneventful, *New Morning* redefines music as we know it. Here we have the first truly unique album of the 1970's, a collection of songs written and sung in a style that will probably be as hard to copy as it is to describe.

Certainly it comes the closest of Bob's albums since his motorcycle accident to the albums before it. Gone is the hard edge, or at least it has been tempered by the wisdom and tenderness of a man who knows the responsibility of small children crawling up his lap. And yet the indomitable will and all the excitement are still there.

This is an album for hardcore Dylan fans. From the first few bars you know you are being called to attention and ordered to report.

It's also an album for anyone else who can accept music without gimmicks, without pretension and without the meaningless commercial pondering that once again have begun to deluge us, music sung with taste and consideration by a man who has become the accepted master of phrasing and timing, as well as of lyrics, by the other chief musicians of his age.

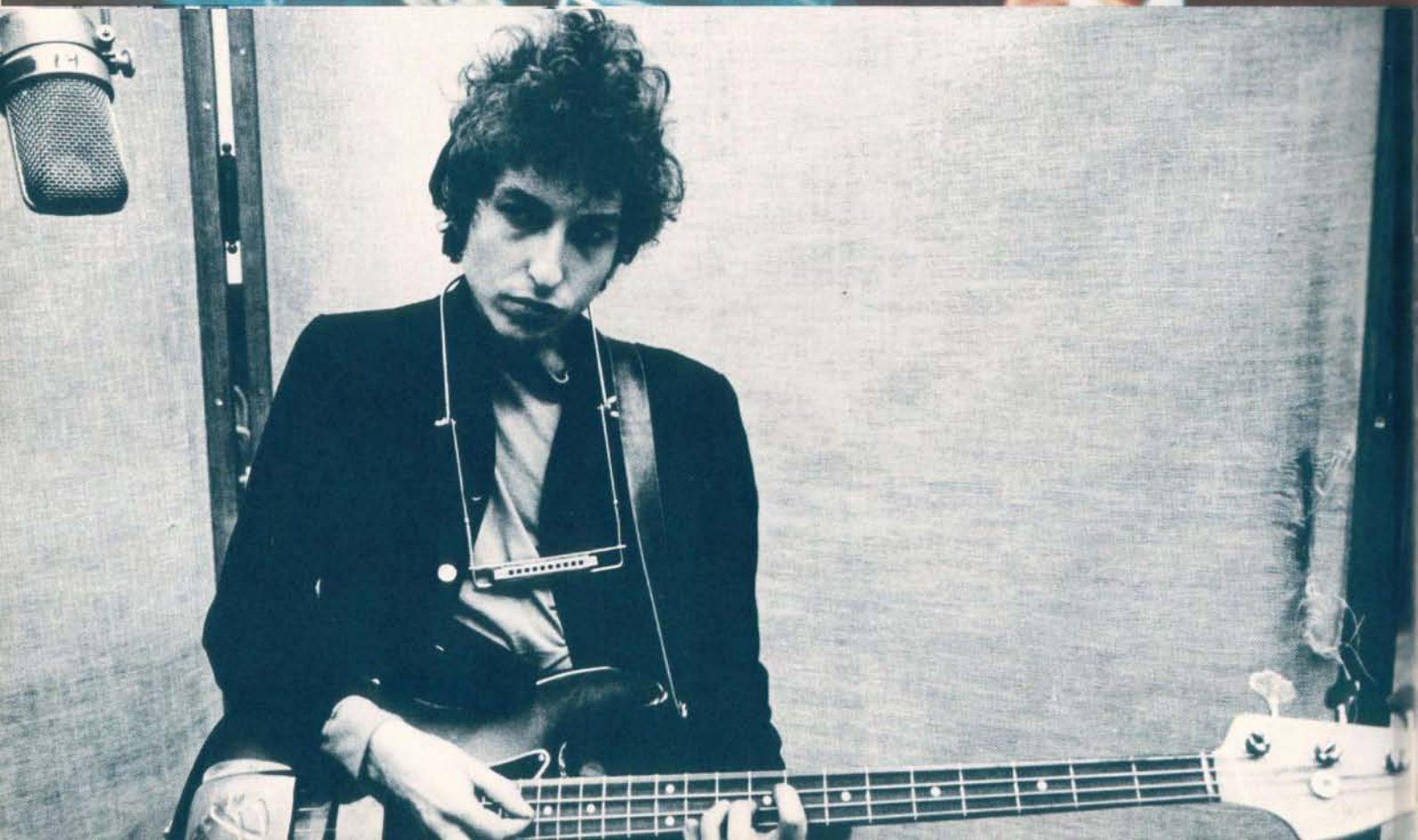
As a matter of fact, the measure of Bob Dylan's influence on music and the respect that he commands among other musicians is in the music itself. How many others could walk into a studio filled with musicians who have never played with one another before, snap them to attention and come out with such results in one or two takes?

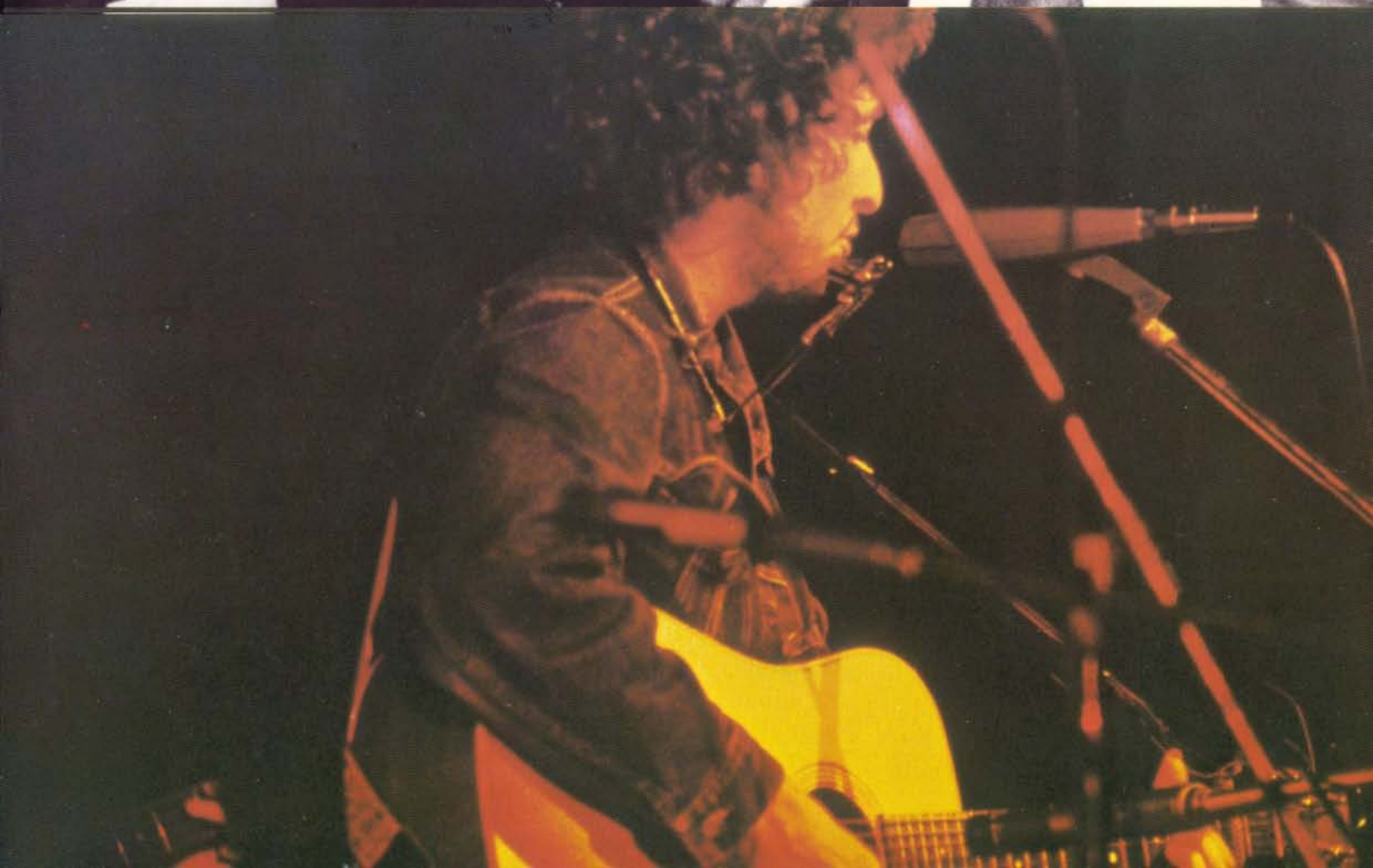
On "New Morning," the band sounds as if it's been playing together for years. But then I will talk more about the personnel and the songs next time.

Alfred G. Aronowitz

New York, N.Y. Post

Nov. 30, 1970





A couple of months back, during an interview with singer-songwriter Jackson Browne, the talk turned to Bob Dylan, whose upcoming tour plans were then only rumor. Browne was trying to explain what Dylan had meant to him in the 1960s.

"I never understood much of what he was saying," Browne started out, "but the way he said it—there was so much magnetism there... and I remember being screwed up in an ice skating rink in Snowmass, Colo., seeing prisms in the snowflakes—and somebody put on *Like a Rolling Stone*... I'd heard it so many times before. But for the first time, all at once, I really understood it, what Dylan was saying and how he's affected us all..."

The explanation fumbled off into stream-of-consciousness rambling. Taken on the face, it made little sense. But I understood perfectly. For Browne, it was Colorado, for me, it had been a dreary, pervert-ridden bus station in Pittsburgh with my bus to Boston a gray dawn away. A radio was playing somewhere. *Like a Rolling Stone* echoed through the place, and to explain how much that particular song suddenly seemed to mean would sound silly and sophomoric.

The point is, Dylan has touched a great many people on just such personal levels. Usually, they have an equally hard time describing exactly why or how, lapsing instead into emotional flashbacks.

For easier is to describe what Dylan meant to a society and a generation—among them, one presumes, the five million people who wanted one of the 651,000 tickets available for his first tour in eight years, a tour that brings together Dylan and his old backup group, The Band, and kicks off Jan. 3 in Chicago.

More than any other performer in "pop" music, people have tuned into Dylan, seeking both a handle with which to grasp his musical psyche and, in his enigmatic imagery, readymade handles for their own lives and problems.

Dylan himself always disdained analysis. For his part, as his 1964 song *All I Really Want to Do* explained with caustic humor, he wasn't "lookin' for you to feel like me, see like me or be like me"—nor analyze, categorize, finalize or advertise.

But it didn't work that way from the other side. Dylan had become a Gemini guru, his songs laboriously dissected to lengths bordering on the absurd in search of ultimate meanings, clues with which to categorize the man whose music summed up so much of the 1960s.

And those songs were, at first, straightforward enough—reflections of the idealistic social conscience of the early years of the last decade, when the times really seemed to be changing.

But society's wrongs have never been righted by a song, and eventually Dylan moved from traditional folk and protest into folk-rock 'n' roll, with ritual revisitations of Highway 61 and absurd trips to a tragic Desolation Row.

With the switch from acoustical guitar to electricity, he lost the purists; on his last tour, in 1985, he was booed at Arie Crown Theater in Chicago during the rock 'n' roll segments. Some of the folk purists later changed their minds, some didn't. It didn't matter, for the move to electricity garnered Dylan a far larger following, one that remained with him through the disillusionment of the drug-laced middle '60s and *Blonde on Blonde*.

He seemed always to be saying so much. It didn't matter that Dylan's voice was harsh and nasal, that in the early days he'd copied Rambling Jack Elliott shamelessly and many of his melodies could be traced back to Woody Guthrie.

It didn't matter that he was a middle-class Jewish kid singing of "hard traveling," that his following was mainly kids

who shared of roughing it amounted to flying tourist class. The songs were old in tradition but new in scope, and far more memorable than anything else on the music scene.

Later, he turned accusatory, his songs topical diatribes against society's perversions of justice; later still there was the surrealistic imagery that surfaced with the move to rock 'n' roll and reached a rolling peak with *Blonde on Blonde*.

The configurations of speech seemed to mask so much—surely there was wisdom in the twisted convolutions of Dylan's *Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands*, his *Visions of Johanna*. Perhaps they were, after all, nothing but words; by this time drugs figured heavily in Dylan's life and when people spoke of him "speeding" through *Blonde on Blonde* they weren't referring to the amount of time it took him to turn the tracks out.

But the songs seemed to have meanings regardless, just below the surface of the mind—both Dylan's and the listener's. He had grown from cult figure into a generation's Mr. Tambourine Man.

Dylan had, in effect, ascended to pop sainthood. He also apparently was in full realization of the martyrdom that inevitably goes with such accolades. He had come a long way from Hibbing, Minn., and his days as Bob Zimmerman, a high school kid who dreamed of being a bigger rock 'n' roll star than Elvis Presley and later, during his short college career, parked his Hush Puppies at a Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity house.

As it turned out, Dylan's Elvis aspirations eluded him, but he became something infinitely more influential. The myths surrounded him for years, and he himself seemed to encourage them, shrouding himself in them for protection.

With his motorcycle accident in 1966 and subsequent withdrawal from the scene, the myths mushroomed anew concerning his condition. Currently, rumors of ill health again surround Dylan, fostered by stories that Dylan plans to seclude himself during the tour, living on his plane and emerging only at concert time.

Of course, Dylan's lifestyle has never been the flashy, high-profile sort. When he turned up at the Bangladesh concert at Madison Square Garden in 1971, after a two-year absence from the stage and six years after his last tour, it was big news—as big as George Harrison and Ringo Starr playing together on the same stage for the first time in four years.

Several years ago, a reporter visited Woodstock, where Dylan, his wife, and kids make their home, and asked the slugger why he hadn't hit the road for so long. Family man Dylan replied, "I just don't feel compelled to tour. And I have more responsibilities now... But if I'm going to go out there on tour, it's got to be something that moves, that takes everyone along."

The Band, too, has shunned the big tour scene in recent years. Even after *Rock of Ages*, their big-selling effort of 1971, the group said no to the rigors of the road.

"To go back on the road before now," Band lead guitarist Robbie Robertson said after the current tour was announced, "would have seemed like spinning our wheels... You've got to be dying to go on the road or it's stale, meaningless. You've got to be up for it, which is the case now. We're as excited about it as little kids."

To say that the rest of the pop music world is equally excited is putting it mildly. In Chicago, as with every place else along the tour route, ads were placed in local newspapers instructing how to send for tickets to the show. The second day after they appeared here, some 37,000 tickets were snapped up, and thousands of requests went unfilled. Right now, at least, the Dylan and Band tour looms as one of the big musical events of the '70s.

Ironically enough, it was with the 70s that many people came to the conclusion that Dylan, at age 30, had said all he had to say. The late '60s brought John Wesley Harding and Nashville Skyline, featuring a new Dylan steeped in country-rock influences and frequently wallowing in romantic schmaltz.

And in the summer of 1970, there was *Self Portrait*, a sloppy pastiche of pop and traditional, with Dylan indulging his desire to interpret a lot of songs by other writers.

It was, to put it simply, wretched. But in November of that same year came *New Morning*, the album Al Kooper kept saying would surprise everyone. After the nadir of *Self Portrait*, anything would have sounded good, and the new album held out mild hope for Dylan's future.

Combining the softness of *Nashville Skyline* with the fresh-start, uptempo title tune, some jazz and a smidgen of the old enigmatic Dylan, there was nothing terribly memorable in the way of music.

The success of *New Morning*, and the critical response to it as Dylan's "return," were mainly overreactions to his having said anything at all.

In the intervening years between that album and today, Dylan has done little worth mentioning besides Bangladesh. There was the single, *George Jackson*, a protest song some felt protested too much, as though to placate those who said he'd lost his social conscience.

There was a second *Greatest Hits* album with a couple of new songs, memorable only for the fact they reflected more of Leon Russell's influence than Dylan's. There were a few surprise appearances. And there was an acting role in "Billy the Kid," though neither the movie nor the sound track were among Dylan's finer hours.

And not one of his finer hours is the kindest way to describe the newly released *Dylan* (Columbia). Until recently, Dylan recorded for Columbia. Now he does not, but the company apparently has decided to get this one last record out of him by issuing three-year-old out-takes from *Self Portrait* sessions.

While anything Dylan records is generally of interest to those who care about him, musically these cuts are as weak as everything else connected with *Self Portrait*'s dismal doings.

Meanwhile, Dylan has gone into the record biz for himself. Early this month Elektra-Asylum records confirmed what had been rumored for some time—that Dylan was forming his own label, to be distributed by Elektra-Asylum.

Christened "Ashes and Sand," the new label's first release is due out in January, to coincide with the tour. To be titled *Love Songs*, according to one Elektra source (another says it's to be called *Ceremonies of the Horseman*), the album features Dylan and the Band singing 10 new songs recorded in Los Angeles studios.

Advance orders have already given it the status of a gold record—Dylan's fourteenth. The tour concerts are also to be recorded on the label, with a live album slated for release later in 1974. It, too, will undoubtedly ship gold.

Dylan will always sell no matter what he does—or doesn't—have to say, or how he says it. The memories are there, and it is the memories and the mystique that spurred millions of ticket requests on this long-awaited tour.

What sort of musical Dylan takes to the stage remains to be seen and heard, but the concerts promise to be of as much interest as sociological events as musical ones. There is always something fascinating about watching a performer try to live up to his legend and emerge stronger than his mystique. There is generally something depressing about it as well.

Such occasions more often than not leave

a taste of sadness, for legends are hard things to live up to. And mystiques as measuring sticks frequently result in live performances that never measure up to expectations.

"A false clock tries to tick out my time," Dylan sang once in his make-a-stand, remain-as-I-am, bid-farewell-and-not-give-a-damn days a decade ago. "But if the arrow is straight, and the point is slick, it can pierce through dust no matter how thick..."

Whether or not the clock of Dylan's creativity has ticked out all this time is the question.

Ly. Van Matre
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. News

Dec. 30, 1973

Baltimore, Md., Evening Sun

Dec. 30, 1973

Elyria, Ohio, Chronicle-Telegram

Jan. 2, 1974

Des Moines, Iowa, Tribune

Dec. 28, 1973

Blonde on Blonde

No question about it, this is the best rock 'n' roll record ever made. It combines the virtuosic vocabulary of *Bringing It All Back Home* with the burning intensity of *Highway 61 Revisited* and takes it one maniacal step closer to the edge. Rock 'n' roll has always been a struggle against strict guidelines and unrelenting authority, and *Blonde on Blonde* is the classic snarl from the existential corner. Never before has Dylan appeared so caged; songs tear at you and at themselves. *I Want You* is chillingly elemental, *Just Like A Woman* is essentially universal; *Pledging My Time* is simply the starkest statement ever made in rock about the ambivalence of hope. Even the throw-aways are brilliant; *Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat* is all desperation lone.

There are moments of apocalypse here—I don't care whether he means them literally or not; Dylan is so intuitively in touch with the eternal gut realities that what shines through is just pure vision. *Memphis Blues Again* must not be the future, just as one must worry for Dylan if *Visions of Johanna* is actually the present. That's it! This collection of moments is so compelling that it demands personal, intimate response. If I listen for a decade I doubt I'll be able to get all the way through *Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands* without my mind wandering in dizziness, peculiar reverie, cast adrift by Dylan's navigation.

The production sears like a bare lightbulb in a barren room—what is this strange attraction I feel, this shortness of breath? It's no frills, pure-form rock 'n' roll; it'll kill you if you get too near it and it'll kill you if you don't.

The gem here will undoubtedly be overlooked, surrounded as it is by so many more accessible statements. (*Soon After the Sun*) *One of Us Must Know* is as close as Dylan is likely to come to asking to be touched, to allowing himself to be led as well as followed. Dylan whines, moans, growls, cries throughout the record. It hurts to listen. It feels great to listen. Pain sure brings out the best in people, doesn't it?

Peter Knobler

Crawdaddy, March 1976

...Yeah, Yeah—But Can A

Bob Dylan Get In?

It's not easy getting elected into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

A songwriter must have a 20-year catalogue of unquestioned hits. And must pass the flinty Tin Pan eyes of 400-add members of the National Academy of Popular Music (Sammy Cahn, president).

The in-fighting is fierce. Like baseball players, songwriters have to negotiate a crazy maze of tests certifying their "greatness."

date Johnny Mercer, first president of the academy, pushed a few years ago to open up the gates a little wider. He wanted to take as many as 20 newcomers a year. "There's nothing wrong with honoring the dead," he argued, "but why wait when worthy people are alive?"

Irving Berlin, being very Irving Berlin, dissented. "Don't cheapen it, Johnny," he said. Today, some 20 names are submitted each year. About five are selected. But the debates go on.

Oddly, a few bonafide heavy-weights aren't in yet. Such as Robert MacGregor Wood, overlooking Wood is like missing Babe Ruth. Among Wood's songs: *When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob-Bob-Boobin' Along*, *I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover*, *Side by Side*, *Paddlin' Madeline Home*, *When The Moon Comes Over the Mountain*...

Oscar Brand, curator of the Hall of Fame and the Arnold Toynbee of American music, is campaigning for Bob Dylan. The latest reading on Dylan: still untested by time.

"A lot of the members say history is not in yet on Dylan," Brand reports. "I disagree. He's going to make it."

The hall's facilities were donated by Alex Parker, who owns the building at 1 Times Square and is as much in awe of songwriters as I am. The exhibits are largely the work of Brand and Anna (*Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup*) Sosenko.

They have meticulously assembled the artifacts, which include a rare collection of letters, original sheet music and a growing library on the history of pop.

Brand is hard at work now trying to construct a videotape room at the hall. "Many of our greats are dead or dying," he said. "I would love to get Richard Rodgers or Irving Berlin on videotape, talking for three or four hours about their art. Time is short." It is. Of the 168 members of the hall, 118 are already dead.

For people who remember what it was like to root for a favorite song to become Number One, the Songwriters Hall of Fame is pure joy. Most important, it's free and open to the public from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays.

Randall Poe
Sunday News, New York, N.Y.
Feb. 27, 1977

Dylan: Poet
"I have to make a new song out of what I know and out of what I'm feeling."

—Bob Dylan
The first and essential point is to realize that from the very outset of his career Bob Dylan is before all things a poet; the second, that his dramatic genius has found its natural expression in a specific form peculiar to himself, in which the parts played by words and music are on the same level of importance. Bob Dylan's aim—at first an unconscious one, but by degrees standing out ever more clearly before him—is to create a new poetry out of the elements of the music, an artistic ideal he was not the first to strive after. He has been quoted as saying: "It's hard being free in a song—getting it all in. Songs are so confining. Woody Guthrie told me once that songs don't have to rhyme—that they don't have to do anything like that but it's not true. A song has to have some kind of form to fit into the music. You can bend the words and the meter, but it still has to fit somehow. I've been getting freer in the songs I write, but I still feel confined. That's why I write a lot of poetry—if that's the word. Poetry can make its own form."

Not by the set standard of either academic or free verse should Bob Dylan's poetry be judged or weighed, but regarded as a separate entity with a character peculiar to itself. Nothing so distorts the artistic vision as a one-sided musical or literary view. Bob Dylan's poetry is not that of the librettist, nor his music that of the opera composer. One must grasp the artist's

conception as a whole, and in considering the details never lose sight of their intimate relation to the complete work. Music is the soul of Bob Dylan's poems; thereby the deep, ineffable things of life find expression, while the action, gesture and speech, down to the smallest detail, are rhythmically controlled, and the inherent unity of music and verse, of emotion, gesture and speech, is restored. Thus only has the poet full command over every means of realizing his conceptions, enabling him to present them in perfect bodily shape before us, and illumined by the spirit within. He himself is silent, and lets the voice of the soul speak. This interpretation of poetry was Bob Dylan's aim from the beginning, but he first endeavored to reach it through the reform of music—however unsatisfactory, in that it hampers the artist's creative powers, misleading him gravely too, at times, but still more the audience and critics, who are oblivious to everything in his work but what pertains to the music.

It is Bob Dylan's task to combat all that is alien, artificial, or formal in his art, and finally to evolve his own laws and regulations as to outward form and inward significance, but we can best gain a thorough insight into the magnitude of the poet's achievement by examining his methods and the fundamental character of his genius.

In Bob Dylan's life and career the year 1965 was a turning-point. In his earlier poems, while endeavoring to follow the well-known methods, he had sought to transmute the "folk song"-poem into folk-rock. These experiments were of infinite value to Bob Dylan: through all of them he arrived by slow degrees, and freed from all preconceived doctrines, at the true perception of the goal he had in view and the assurance that it could only be reached by an, as yet, untrodden path. With *Like A Rolling Stone* and *Desolation Row* he severed all connection with the present-day "folk song" and broke once and for all with the accepted folk-singer stage convention. Bob Dylan's changed attitude towards folk music formula after 1964, and the consequent freedom and independence of his genius, roused a storm of conflicting opinion. Immediately the rallying cries of the old and new styles—"folk," "folk-rock" and "hard rock"—came into use. Some fans went with him as far as his LP *Bringing It All Back Home*, but would have none of the later works; others again looked contemptuously on the "new" poems, regarding them merely as stepping-stones, to be forgotten as speedily as might be. From the first Bob Dylan wrote beautiful and intensely dramatic poems, but he began by clothing them in "folk-song" form. This insured their popularity, but the dramatic part was neglected and as far as possible relegated to the background of the performance. A complete and adequate performance such as *Visions of Johanna* offers at once the early works in their true character—the "folk-rock" traits almost fade away and the dramatic element shines forth in undiminished brilliancy. The later works, owing to their strenuous style and the model afforded by the first performances throughout England, were at first preserved from the crassest misconception: being regarded merely as a new opening for him.

As in the music structure so in the content do we follow the evidence of increased freedom and originality; that he has expended no more trouble on the lines than seemed necessary to produce a good poem. *Like A Rolling Stone* stands on an infinitely higher plane. There is no fixed meter; long and short, rhymed and unrhymed lines occur just as it happens, and contain very properly their own appropriate lyric meter to distinguish them from the dialogue. Any marked difference of style in the address of the various *dramatis personae* is not aimed

at; the characterization finds expression in the music. Only when it is amplified by music and declamation does Bob Dylan's verse stand forth in all its living strength and beauty, in the subtle distinction of its peculiar rhythm. The printed lines in the older works frequently do scant justice to this rhythm: one must hear it, and properly delivered, to appreciate to the full charm of its simplicity, its felicitous adaption to every change of emotion and of scene. In *Like A Rolling Stone* and *Your Brand New Leopard Skin Pill Box Hat* an entirely new language prevails, because of the spontaneous and unconventional meter. The distinctive attribute of the early poems is the marvelous expression of passionate love. Carried along on surging waves of harmony—for instance, in *Visions Of Johanna*—the emotion finds utterance, with perfect verisimilitude, in a series of ejaculations. The spoken drama would hardly venture on such a *tour de force*. In such passages, however, where clearness of narration is of importance, as in *Desolation Row*, the music is subordinated. And it is just this collaboration between words and music, thought out by Bob Dylan with a most delicate sense of dramatic fitness and arrangement, which affords such endless possibilities. In his choice of words and turns of phrase Bob Dylan practically creates the language for his poems, as seen in *I'll Keep It With Mine* written for chanteuse Nico.

You will search babe

At any cost
But how long, babe
Can you search for what's not lost
Ev'rybody will help you
Some people are very kind

But if I can save you any time
Come on, give it to me
I'll keep it with mine

I can't help it
If you might think I'm odd
If I say I'm not loving you for what you are
But for what you're not
Everybody will help you
Discover what you set out to find.

But if I can save you any time
Come on, give it to me
I'll keep it with mine

The train leaves
At half past ten
But it'll be back tomorrow
Same time again
The conductor he's weary
He's still stuck on the line.

But if I can save you any time
Come on, give it to me
I'll keep it with mine

(Quoted from *Bob Dylan approximately complete works*—pirate ed. Amsterdam)

Poet Allen Ginsberg, whose sense for literary style was as acute as his philological judgment, described Bob Dylan's language to me as "a reading into his own unconscious as into a Rorschach blot—he says without thought for reason, perfect metaphors he hears in his deathly soul." Through all of Bob Dylan's writings there runs an intense love of his own language, an affectionate freedom in his handling of it such as we meet in no other twentieth century Americans but e.e. cummings and Theodore Spencer. The happy phrase, daring compression, virile strength, versatility of meter, an astounding wealth of pregnant and purposeful terms, simplicity of construction, an almost unprecedented capacity for the expression of overwhelming emotion and of mysticism, an extraordinary insight into the hearts of the people

and their turns of speech—all these characteristics might be enumerated, and still the most striking and admirable be left unmentioned. Anyone reading or hearing two such poems as *Visions Of Johanna* or *Like A Rolling Stone* in succession cannot but be filled with amazement, not to say perplexity, both in respect of the words and of the music; that it should be possible for one to have such complete mastery over two worlds so utterly diverse. The most notable achievement of Bob Dylan's genius, and in which the young poet stands alone, is that for every work he coins, as it were, a new language, endows each fresh emotion with a new semblance and a harmony peculiarly its own. Such a manifestation of genius is extremely rare, and adverse criticism will always remain the futile obscurity of phrase and meaning. Furthermore, Bob Dylan has constrained our language to revert to its elementary state, in which abstractions have as yet no place, but where poetry, imagery, emotion take on a concrete shape. But, above all things, let no one who studies Bob Dylan as poet and word-builder forget that none of his poems are intended to be read, and must not, therefore be hampered with conditions which belong to the printed poem as such.

The new and original structure of Bob Dylan's dramatic language meets with endless opposition and misconception, as if to be expected at a period when public taste inclines excessively to emaculated, but outwardly polished and elegant, literary forms. Nowadays we have come to understand and appreciate originality and individuality, and can thus afford to ridicule the shallow and malicious criticism passed by the so-called cultured classes on Bob Dylan's poems or any new art forms when they first appear.

Gerard Malanga

Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid

From Sam Peckinpah's PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID. Music by Bob Dylan. Available at the UNIVERSITY CO-OP RECORD SHOP, 2246 Guadalupe.

Bob Dylan aficionados will probably not be too happy with the protest poet of the 1960's latest album.

If they want the traditional music laden with the expected "heavy" Dylanesque lyrics then this soundtrack will be a letdown. If comparisons are to be made with previous Dylan works, PAT GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID would fare as the least "meaningful" and most insipid of records.

BUT comparing Dylan's previous accomplishments with this sound track would be like comparing the Empire State building with a geodesic dome. Each has its structure, style shape and sound. Another Dylan category would have to be created.

This album is a film soundtrack and its function is to complement the movie plot by helping to backup the action with mood-setting sounds and storytelling lyrics. This it does brilliantly.

PAT GARRETT is really an especially pleasant recording. It provides easy listening in content and character. Minimum effort projects you into its wavering almost surreal silken tones, lifting your head slightly and letting it bounce in semi-stuporous mirth.

The best cut on this album is *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*, a song about death set to acoustical instrumentation and gospel-like background vocals. In fact, this particular piece ought to have been titled *Main Title Theme* as it bewilderingly conjures up the entire feeling of the movie. Its spaghetti western overtones rekindle different scenes from the flick.

Bob Dylan is back! This time wearing a refreshing new sound.
Rag, Austin, Tex.
Oct. 15, 1973



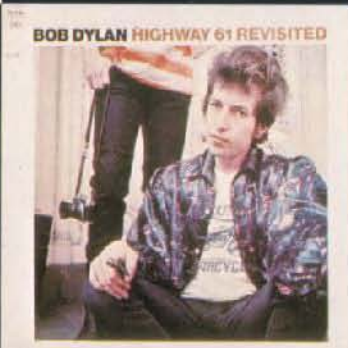
1962



1963



1964



1965



1966



1969



1970



1970



1973



1974



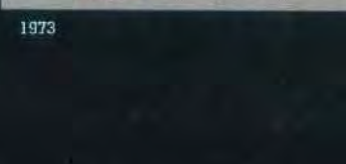
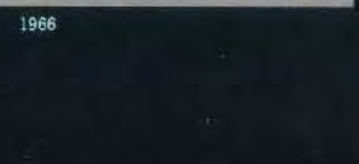
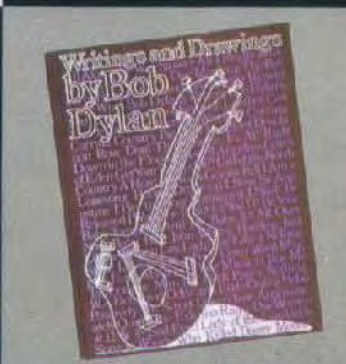
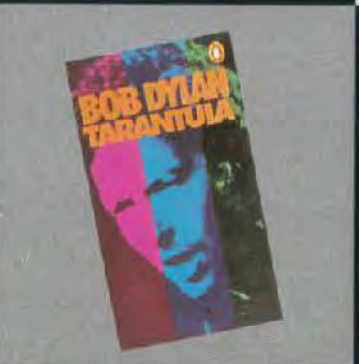
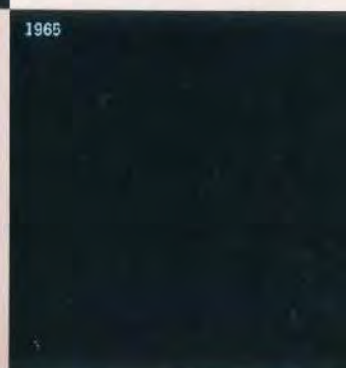
1975



1975



1976



where more and more older men, like Bob Dylan first impinged upon our consciousness. Our view of the world was the view held by those before us.

But Dylan changed all that with his songs, with his poetic images. "Chains of flashing images" he called them. He made us dream everything, as Sainte-Beuve said poetry must do.

So one after another they came, those songs by the Minnesota minstrel, and they changed our lives, in ways we have yet to understand.

In the process, he himself became a figure of such ecstatic, quivering luminosity that his audience literally hallucinated his presence.

At the height of the Dylan impact in the Sixties, the height of the above ground visible impact, not a day went by that someone did not claim to see him here on the street in the Bay Area. It was one of the most amazing things about the Monterey Pop Festival, the most amazing party ever held, that person after person intimately familiar with Dylan said that somehow they thought he was there in disguise, if you will, present though never seen.

As I have said before, I think it literally true that no one who absorbed that first body of work—jiggling veins of rhythmic mother wits, as Marlowe once described poetry—was ever again to view the state of the union and its history in the old, classroom civics course terms. Dylan changed that.

But there came an end, not only to the overt message, but in a deeper sense to the dramatic contrast that message could make. In one way, Dylan was a victim of relativity. He had trained an audience to wait for cataclysmic revelations and then he gave them simple beauty instead. They were not ready.

Dylan's situation now is that great numbers of his former audience have abandoned him, convinced he is a sellout to commercial interests, his creative flame gone and able only to echo his old achievements.

There are some among us, though, who continue to find his work of deep, even expanding impact, a living thing that defies description but still contains "those brave transitory things" once said of Marlowe's poetry. It is increasingly interesting how, for every echelon of audience which leaves him, Dylan seems to attract a new one, and—this is no accident—it is an audience more interested in poetry than in politics, for all the two may ultimately meet.

For the artist runs his own race and there are no competitors, only his own internal stopwatch and the roar of the crowd.

Dylan, surely, wants approval. After all, he's the man with the stagefright, singing with all his might. But in his heart, he knows what he does and how well he does it and sometimes on his personal lonely strip of sand he has had to face the possibility there really is no communication, only the blink of an eye.

I think that is the reason Dylan's return to public concerts last year was such a triumph and such a surprisingly serene tour. He knew where he was at. He hoped, of course, his audience would accept it. But he was prepared for anything; had he not been "biked and scorned" when he made the big leap to electric? When it turned out the audience was ready, too, he must certainly have dug it.

But there is always a part of the American audience which turns against its hero when he does not conform to its definition of his role. Thus was Ellington imprisoned within the framework of his own good taste in having such individual soloists that when they left, the voices changed, and again by having the audacity to begin with the writing of masterpieces.

Ellington was in the full flush of maturity when he faced his deepest problems.

too withstood it. One of his most remarkable achievements was that he did not continue the angry drive to ultimate bitterness begun in *Positively 4th Street* but mellowed out and eventually gave us *Planet Waves* and now, *Blood on the Tracks*.

If we are so much younger now, given a new, fresh view of our world by the poet, it is still sad that some have turned his words back against him demanding he lead, if not with his body, at least with his lyric statement. But that is not what poetry does, though it may be what some form of verse a rung down the ladder may do.

Listen to the songs on his new album, *Blood on the Tracks*. He has brought it all together once more, all the sounds from the air and the earth in this culture, all the myths and symbols he spewed out once before and redigested for the use of his art.

It doesn't matter if the poet speaks directly to an issue by its familiar labels; what matters is the magic he creates in the saying of it. If he can lift the veil for one brief moment for us to see, even if we do not understand what we see, then he has proven his art.

Today's pop music audience has many distractions to listen to. There are dozens of good records, more than a handful of good groups and solo performers onstage and on the radio. But almost without exception, they are entertainers and what they do is not art in the deepest sense.

How long has it been since anyone said anything to you from a record that meant anything? Yesterday's pop groups, fun though they were, rank right there with yesterday's pop hit disc, and while we had a good time with Ahab the Arab, he hardly changed our lives. Yet, we will remember the songs on all the Dylan albums even if we did not like them and even if their impact now is not as surprising and shocking as in the beginning.

Meanwhile, the argument with those who have turned against him is futile. The Portuguese have a saying: *Fazer bem a velhacos: é deitar água no mar*, which means that to be kind to scoundrels is to throw water into the sea. Substitute "fools" for "scoundrels" and you have it.

Ralph J. Gleason

Rolling Stone

March 13, 1975

We've Got Dylan Back Again!

It came on the radio in the late afternoon and from the first note it was right. Bob Dylan bringing it all back home again.

I couldn't believe it. There was no warning, only the knowledge that it had been, in fact, completed and was due out shortly. But there it was with that warm, rich, groovy sound and Bob singing out to all of us that everything is all right. "To be lost without you, and you know it's true," and I thought, what about us?

Then there was that great line about the locusts singing, "the man standing next to me, his head was exploding, while I was praying the pieces wouldn't fall on me." Ah, there we were. Back home again.

I was driving along a Berkeley street then, and I had the fantasy that all the other car radios were tuned to KSAN and the Dylan album was blowing their minds that very minute and I looked at the drivers as they went past me and they had smiles on their faces. I resisted the impulse to start blowing the horn like at the end of the war or something. Crazy? Sure! Only this dude thinks you're fine.

God, it's beautiful. I have played it an even dozen times in two days. I can't find a weak track, not that I'm lookin', but you know. Time passes slowly when you're searching for love and we've all been searching this past long time, searching blindly and searching almost mechanically, fatalistically, hoping against hope that something would happen.

This album is a sign. You believe that? I

come over the airwaves and out of the grooves in I don't know when and after these grim weeks of Agnew and Reagan and Nixon and Billy Graham and all that shit, it was like the cool, clear water from a mountain spring to hear his voice so true, so good.

The album makes me feel good. Every song on it. It is the most reassuring thing that has happened this year of the bombings. Ah, I can hear the crazies say, it is more pop for the people. It is avoidance. It is meaningless. Rejoice, rejoice, we have no choice. Those love songs are a celebration of life that description of country living is everyman's dream come true. You'd have stayed there too, wouldn't you?

Then Elvis in the big hotel. He did it in Las Vegas and he can do it here! It all makes me feel so good. All the little turns of phrases, the humor, the flashing images, the sentimentality.

Even the waltz-time country & western love song and the simplistic *It Dogs Run Free* with its jazz piano copping Avery Parish's solo on *After Hours*, the classic blues of the big band years. Kooper has turned into a hell of a piano player. He's got his chops up. He must have been working at that. And the scat vocal throw-back to Gloria Wood and Pete Condon.

Then *New Morning* came on. Like an early mist. So clean, so sweet. "This must be the day that all my dreams come true." What a love song! What a message to all of us blinded by paranoia, grimly trying to see through the mark and the smoke and the blood. "So happy just to be alive underneath the sky of blue..."

You want folk music? Songs about people with stakes coming out of them and heads rolling off? Brighton girls are like the moon... and then the raunchy married-couple-with-kids-down-home song and then the parables of Dan. And the rest—

It's all there. All that it ever was and all we'd hoped for and you don't need a weberman to know which way this wind blows. He's coming out again. Come on, Bob! We need you. That's the truth, man, we really do. Come out, Bob, come out!

And he will, just as sure as God made little apples. Didn't he bring it all back home again just to show us where it really was at? With Victoria Spivey on the cover and all? Jesus. What do you want, man, what do you want? I mean I wouldn't do a thing like that to you. Come on out, Bob, there's nothing you can do now after such a bright new morning except to come on out into the day.

Sure, the Gypsy fled in the night and the dancing girl, too, and the room was empty and dark but that was Vegas. We're still the real world, no matter what they say in Washington. Still there, still waiting and still digging it all. If not for you! Of course, what a great thing to say right now at this moment in history like he had been waiting for just the right second to answer the doubts.

His song poems are so open, just as they have always been so open, that you can find it all in there if you look. Sometimes you don't even have to look very hard, it comes right out to speak to you. But every time it's there. In every track of this album there's something for all of us to chew on.

Here we are, Tim Leary armed and dangerous in Algiers. Nixon armed and dangerous in the White House. Bombs bursting in Rochester and guns firing at random in Cairo. The Kent State massacre being blamed on the massacred, Jackson's dead accused of violence and the poison spreading all around, as no man can trust his brother and the country an armed camp. Five dead in Santa Cruz and the old folks arming against the longhairs even though the clues that turned up the killer came from longhairs. Voluntarily.

"Shoot them!" the sheriff said in Washington and Mitchell predicts we'll rush to the right and in Canada it's martial law.

need what light, what sustenance we can get and that is just what he has given us. The brightest light and the strongest sustenance of all—hope. This is a hopeful album and my God how we need it. America may be greenening but you wouldn't know it from where we stand, any of us looking around numbly at the bumper stickers and the scam on the water.

There is nothing to fear but fear itself, our last real president said. I'm old enough to remember him saying it. Franklin Roosevelt's words coming out over the Atwater Kent that Lenny called the first cathedral we knew. FDR would have dug Dylan, had him in the study for talks and songs and Eleanor would have stood with him as he stood with Josh White. Back then, there was honor on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Yes, this is a message from home to all of us. A message of hope, of joy, of good will and above all of cheer. Good cheer, the kind they don't make so much of anymore. So he got older and caught rainbow trout and had a bunch of kids and all the rest—and what a lovely woman she must be to inspire love songs like these—that really and truly is what it all is about and now he's said it loud and clear.

There will be more. He will be back. He will sing for us again, one man with the stage fright, and he'll stand up there and give it all his might. Because when he gets to the end, he wants to start all over again.

Just remember, though, that when he says that he's afraid, take the poor boy at his word. And remember, we're all afraid, all of us, everywhere. Come back, Bob, we need you. And thank you for that letter from home.

Ralph J. Gleason

Rolling Stone

November 26, 1970

Enigmatic Dylan Revealed In *Desire*

Desire. Perhaps our strongest feeling, yet often enigmatic. What do we really seek? Who do we wish to be? What are our dreams made of? Bob Dylan's new album is like a cubist painting of desires, men who desire, and desire redeemed, punished or frustrated. It is sometimes startlingly direct, but more frequently cryptic and obscure. Look at it this way or that; its meaning shifts and changes with viewpoint. To plunge to the murky depths of *Desire* and emerge clutching solutions is problematic indeed. Yet the mood and atmosphere conveyed by his elusive compositions and portentous music, along with the flashes of insight. Dylan's work so particularly inspires, is reward enough.

The most marvelous aspect of *Desire*, however, is that it reveals a Dylan still growing in both human and artistic terms—encountering new tensions, expressing himself in fresh and different ways. An astonishingly matured mastery of characterization and extended narrative is unveiled. Jacques Levy's collaboration had to help tremendously here. Or maybe it's just that Dylan, as Allen Ginsberg reports, has been reading Joseph Conrad.

Dylan's poetic power and fury sweeps through *Hurricane*, the story of Rubin Carter, with remarkable completeness. The entire account is there, condensed, yet fully detailed. *Joey*, chronicling the life of mobster Joey Gallo, is filled with deft images that grab you hard—Gallo reading Reich and Nietzsche while imprisoned at Attica or dining with his family and looking up to see his killers barge into the restaurant. The song is a parable, a cry for justice, almost mediocrally noble, pervaded by the feel of tragic power and dignity, capturing the paradox of the strict morality of the lawbreaker.

These two songs introduce, quite directly, the theme of the outlaw. If they are this album's John Wesley Harding, then its Frankie Lee and Judas Priest is *Isis*, a perplexing allegorical tale of figures far larger than life. *Romance in Durango* and

'Blood On The Tracks'—the Mature Dylan
To any deep-thinking young person with some kind of purpose in life, nothing can be more frustrating than the social, psychological, and musical vacuum that is America in the 1970's. Media commentators who make a living by revealing "the story behind the story" claim the revolution has become an evolution in which the system can purge itself of iniquity without collapsing like a castle of cards.

The ardent revolutionaries of yesteryear (i.e. Jerry Rubin, Rennie Davis, the like) have found a new spiritual salvation in the teachings not of Mao, but of every starving guru to have bathed in the Ganges. And the music—the anthems we followed, yea, even unto the hands of Chicago's club-wielding finest—has become more of a ball for bucks in the hands of an industry which feeds on its own hype and eats its creative young.

Yet amidst the mediocrity of this frighteningly vacuous decade comes Bob Dylan's second recorded apocalypse in as many years. Growing out of the unrefined inspiration of *Planet Waves*, *Blood On The Tracks* sports a deceiving mellowness which conceals a biting but crystalline vision of a Dylan who has matured in spite of the times, not because of them.

Of course, Dylan's return to the staid corporate formality of Columbia Records sweeps the mythical rug out from under David Geffen's unerring step. A prodigious business wonder Geffen may be, but it takes more than fast-found prestige and financial savvy to keep a Dylan under wraps.

Actually, the finished vinyl tells the important story here. Only a washed-out talkie or nostalgic absurdist would have the audacity to expect a full-circle return to the Dylan of *Blonde On Blonde* or *Bringing It All Back Home*. He himself spelled it out plainly in front of an average 15,000 a night last year in *You Go Your Way, I'll Go Mine*.

Still, *Blood On The Tracks* marks a kind of return—a return to feeling, a "feeling" which Dylan has expressed all through *Self-Portrait*, *New Morning*, and *Planet Waves* and which most of us dismissed as the relaxed meandering of a well-settled family man. Now Dylan directly confronts the listener with a sharply defined portrayal of himself heightened by the relaxed but precise sparsity of the musical arrangements gracing each of the ten new songs.

The First Thing that strikes the casual fan about the album is the uncanny similarity Dylan's current voice bears to the caustic whining of John Wesley Harding or better still, *Blonde On Blonde*. Unlike the outright transformation to crooning marking *Nashville Skyline*, Dylan has found a more evocative middle ground that borrows from both styles a hybrid well appreciated in *Buckets of Rain* and *You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go*.

For those of you who envisioned the Dylan of the 70's as a homely recluse living off well-deserved royalties, *Idiot Wind* turns the blood cold with a striking poetic anger as personal as anything the man has ever recorded. Though not a work of outright vindictiveness, the song—a seven-minute exercise in subtle didactics—defuses the fire of his own mystique and expresses an amazement that what has been made so obvious is still so little understood—

"I couldn't believe that, after all these years

You didn't know me better than that."

If this is any kind of protest, it is one of the self.

In *Lily, Rosemary, and The Jack of Hearts* we have a sparkling realization of Dylan's talent as a teller of stimulating tales, images and names abound in an elusively random type of wordplay, retaining a thread of a theme that is as much a creation of the listener's imagination as it is of

Dylan's. Utilizing the card game metaphor as effectively as Alexander Pope did in "The Rape Of The Lock" three centuries earlier, Dylan plays with our need-obsession for picking meaning in and out of his every word, making A. J. Webersmans of us all and bearing a disarming resemblance to himself in *Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again*.

Because Of their more obvious link with Dylan's stylistic past, these two longer pieces will most certainly be the first objects of initial critical attention. But Dylan's maturity as a singer and songwriter in his middle years is best exemplified in the trilogy of outright love songs gracing Side I. *Tangled up in Blue*, *Simple Twist of Fate*, *You're a Big Girl Now*—each possesses a loosely draped lyrical beauty complemented by the restrained acoustic accompaniment of Eric Weissberg and Delirance. Dylan's voice works well as an emotional gauge—rising in its tension, soothing in its sentimentality.

If *You See Her, Say Hello* sounds like a straight ballad on first listening, but treads the dangerous ice of human relationships. Again, a tasteful strain of guitars and basic rhythm accents the simplicity of the song, a song which uses love more as a veneer for poetic justice—

"If you're makin' love to her

Kiss her for the kid

Who always respected her

For doin' what she did."

Just don't think that meaning hides within each musical note or lyric syllable. The real beauty of *Blood On The Tracks* is the unabashedly straightforward attitude characterizing most, if not all, of the songs here. A rough-hewn blues featuring some of Dylan's strongest vocalizing on the album, *Meet Me In The Morning* finds him playing the weathered veteran of many an affair and one-night stand. Buddy Cage glitters on fuzztone steel guitar, the only real moment when an accompanist blatantly shares the spotlight with the Godylan.

Yet if there is one classic to be handed down from generation to generation, that one song is *Shelter From The Storm*, an acoustic tour de force which propels itself on the simple instrumental drive of Dylan's straight guitar chording and characteristically coarse harp blowing. Lyrically, Dylan dons the role of Everyman, battered by the blistering winds of public and critical demand and teetering on the edge of his own insecurity.

He Acknowledges the situation but fears any capitulation, realizing that a human relationship—love, friendship, even drinking companionship—is the only protective refuge. What's more, that refuge provides a new fertility for tilling of the creative soil. And that is what this album is all about.

"I've heard new-born babies wailing like a moanin' dove
And old men with broken teeth stranded without love

Do I understand your question, man

Is it helpless and forlorn

Come in, she said, I'll give you shelter from the storm."

It seems almost criminal to subject an artistic prize like *Blood on the Tracks* to journalistic scrutiny, especially in this musical day and age when the end result is little more than legitimized hype. To be sure, an attempt even like this one is, at best, temporal, merely an added inducement to a already beleaguered reader to go out and "buy, buy, buy."

But the instrumental purity and vocal determination shaping this maturing vision of one Bob Dylan will last far longer than even Pete Hamill's creative liner notes on the back cover. For *Blood On The Tracks* is a personal and intriguing flash

afforded us by a Dylan so mystical and elusive that he has probably already retired to his protective refuge for preparation of the next assault.

David Fricke

Record Review

Perspectives: 'Bangladesh'—

A Unique Film

There really is no category in which to place the film *The Concert for Bangladesh*. It's not a documentary, it's not home movies and God knows it's not a film in any of the usual sense at all.

But it is something you have to see. Especially if you ever have anything going for the music of Bob Dylan. It's really that simple. What you get in *Bangladesh* is a chance to see Bob Dylan with the added touch of hearing a few bars of three-part harmony with Dylan, George Harrison and Leon Russell. And the concert has to be considered in those terms, looked at for what it is and no matter how disappointing it may be to anyone into film at all, the fact remains that what is up there on the screen is worth the price of admission.

Naturally, the concert was more fun to attend than it is to see on the screen. That is axiomatic of these events. It was more fun to be at Monterey than seeing it on film can ever be, even though the pang of memory is a special kick. And Woodstock and the rest fall into the same bag. It will never be better to see something like this on the screen than it was to have been there and to have been a part of it all.

But that, too, is beside the point. For me, to my eternal regret, I could not be at the concert so I'll settle for the film and the chance to see Dylan, older, a bit heavier, standing there with an entirely different kind of stage presence. Gone now is the nervousness and the occasional illusion of a dancing puppet-like figure. In its place is a man who, whether or not he suffers, as the man in the spotlight is said to suffer, the pains of stage fright, looks and acts in every way as though he was packed full of self-confidence.

And that self-confidence can't be all illusion. Dylan steals the show from everybody and it is a very interesting thing to consider this film and the Joe Cocker film. In the latter Leon Russell, with hardly a line spoken, was the center of gravity every minute he was on screen. He had the kind of charisma (an overworked but useful word) which came through. At the Bangladesh concert, Leon was in the same position, backing up the star and taking an occasional bit himself. In this one, interesting as Leon is, the show is Dylan's when Dylan is on screen and even in the lovely moment when Bob sings *Just Like a Woman* and Leon and George Harrison lean over and join in on the line, it is still Bob's show.

That, incidentally, was one of the two best moments for me in the entire show. The look between Dylan and Russell and the image of oneness that the trio produced was a visual delight. The other image which turned me on was earlier in the program when, for one brief moment, there was this huge close-up of George Harrison on one side of the screen highlighted against an almost totally black background out of which, at the bottom of the screen and at the other end, there was a tiny yellow circle of light in which Ringo's head appeared. There was another visual epiphany, too, come to think of it, and that was at the end of one of the numbers in which Ringo and the other drummer exchanged a brief look of astonishing intimacy, knowledge and recognition. It was a purely musical non-musical moment.

Dylan's few seconds on screen during the brief rehearsal scene was a teaser that screamed for more which unfortunately we do not get. In fact, it is this kind of thing which makes the Bangladesh film so infuriating when you allow yourself to think about it. It is full of frustrations. Why was it

shot in 16mm and needlessly blown up to 70mm resulting in a terrible image? Why was the color so bad? Why was it edited like an amateur newsreel with choppy inserts of lessore Road victims? And above all, why was the sound track so lousy? And it was and (unless they've taken it back and redubbed it) still is an audio disgrace to which I am sincerely sorry to see both George Harrison and Phil Spector's names associated. The sound level of the audience applause, for instance, was deliberately juiced up so that it resembled that faded sound of teeny bopper screams that used to be the prelude to Beatle songs on their tours. A sadly unnecessary thing to have done and indication that someone in the organization, Allen Klein, George Spector, Saul Swimmer, the film's director, is not willing to accept the maturity of the audience and insisted on, in effect, patronizing them by talking down to them.

But no matter how bad the sound track was (on the album the suspicion, reinforced by rumor, continues that there were studio over-dubs) and no matter how stilted and unimaginative the camera work and the editing, it is still true that up there on the screen are some of the greatest musicians of our time in a situation which happened only once and will, in all probability, never happen again and which is total gas to see.

The rancorous critics of the far left may come down on this whole thing for perpetuating the superstar myth, but that's bullshit, as is their corollary concept that we don't need superstars, we need to make the music ourselves. I'm all for everyone making his own music. That's beautiful. But when it comes right down to it, I have to confess I would rather listen to Bob Dylan.

The Bangladesh event was George Harrison's idea and he serves as MC for the concert and is featured a very great deal. A little more than I was personally happy with. He tended to sound cloying after a while. But that was his privilege. The band was excellent, the singers and all the backup. Billy Preston bores me. I regret to say, and on a show like that is really out-classed. The opening portion with the intricate dialogue between Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan and Alla Rakha was fascinating to watch, a remarkable opportunity to see much more of what goes on in Indian musical exchanges than is ordinarily possible at a concert.

Leon Russell was almost as much of a gas as Dylan. It is obvious that he ran the band and his jumping Jack Flash/Youngblood/Jumping Jack Flash number was, aside from Dylan's songs, the best thing in the film. He has such a good ear for the storefront Sunday night sanctified church sound that it is scary.

There is room for much discussion of Dylan on this concert. His choice of material is intriguing. At the very least it shows he is no longer maintaining the myth that these songs were never what he really wanted to do. He is past that now and secure enough to admit the songs are as good as we thought they were. He paid homage to his own past and to our belief in him with that program. One of the strongest attractions of the film is that we never thought we'd see Dylan sing those songs again, especially *Hard Rain*. And why oh why was *Tambourine Man* not in the film? The cameras must have run out of film. No other reason is acceptable.

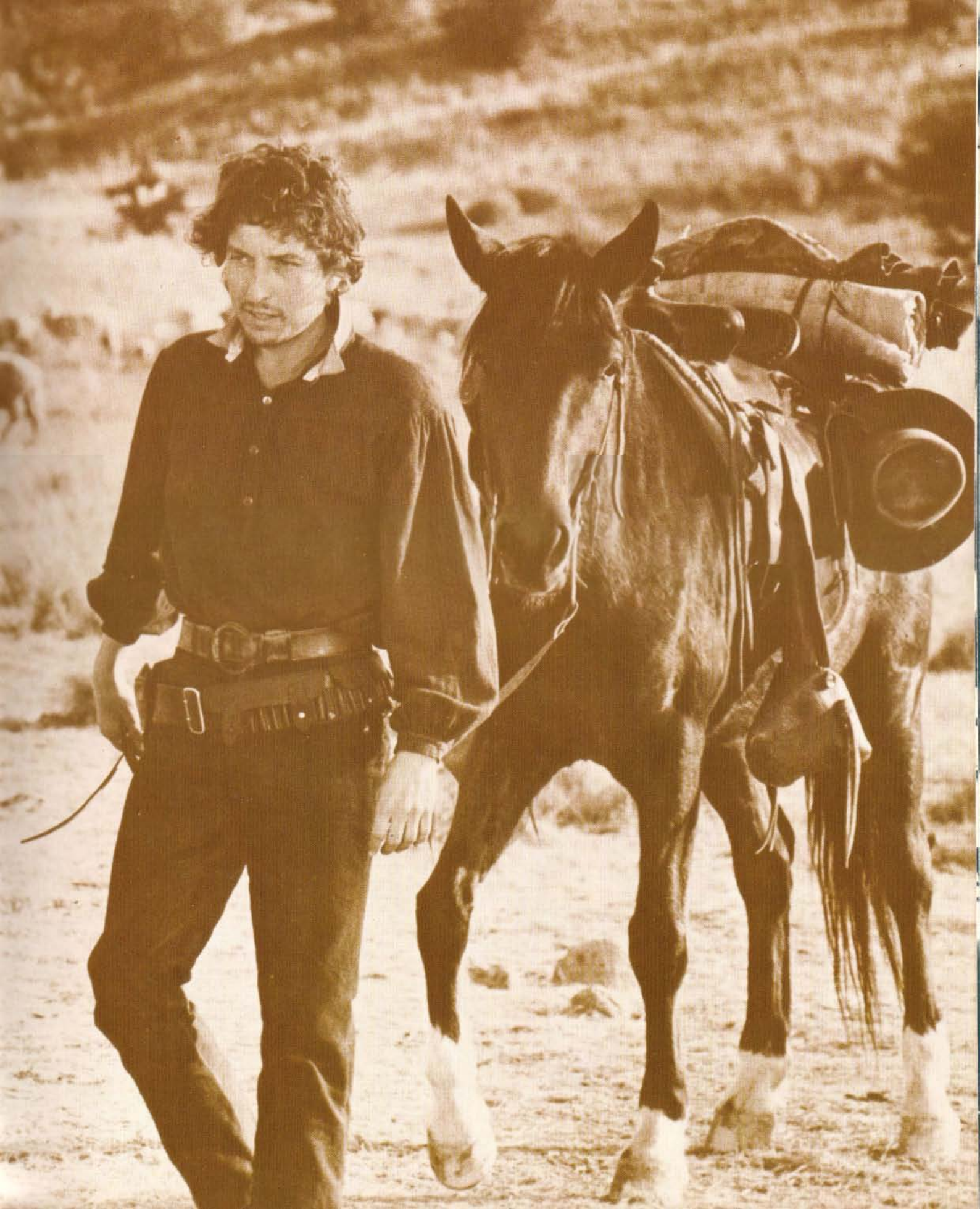
All faults and criticisms aside, however, when you get down to it, the film is well worth the price of admission and I don't care if Allen Klein rips it all off personally and plays monopoly with it. It made me feel good to see it. And in the world we live in, a good feeling is worth a lot.

San Francisco, Calif.

Rolling Stone

April 27, 1972













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Richmond Shepard



THE DRAMA STUDIO
Room 202



...the album carry the out-
through a search for peace and escape,
while *One More Cup Of Coffee* portrays the
weary desperado seeking vengeance,
comfort, justice.

Religious themes haunt the album and
black easy interpretation. *Isis* tells of a
departure, a search, and a return. Much is
implied, yet, finally, "nothing is revealed."
Oh Sister seems to be a tortured cry for love
beneath the eyes of a stern God.

But something is most definitely re-
vealed on the album's final song, a sorrow-
ful plea to Dylan's wife. Here is Dylan, who
has always shrouded himself so carefully,
really opening up for the first time, expos-
ing his feelings, leaving himself vulnera-
ble. It's a powerful, chilling song.

Two women contribute mightily to *De-
sire*. Scarlet Rivera's mournful Gypsy
fiddle twists furiously through the album,
creating the atmosphere of a mysterious
Bohemia. Emmylou Harris' slate-like voice
edges smoothly against Dylan's rasp,
leading to it a hushed, awe-struck color.
Who would have imagined an Emmylou
Dylan duet? Yet strange, beautiful harmo-
ny they make.

I suspect I could listen to *Desire* a thou-
sand times without exhausting my interest
in it. It doesn't yield its secrets easily. But
gold is worth digging for.

Robert R. Silbery
Windsider
New York, N.Y.
Weekly
Jan. 22, 1976

Simplicity is the key here: simple lyrics,
simple changes and simple titles. But then
Dylan has always been able to do great
things with simple bases. The album is a
good one, an easy-going one with nice
songs and excellent guitar work by Dylan
and very capable side musicians like
Roger McGuinn and Carol Hunter. Main
title theme, like all the "Theme" tunes, is
a blend of three chords and some percus-
sion and a feeling of the West. In *Billy 4*, we
get a taste of the Old Bob Dylan: a strum-
ming guitar, harmonica and a wailing
voice crying the injustices, except this time
in cowboy form ("The businessmen from
this want ya to go down, so they hired Pat
Garrett, to force ya to slow down..."). A
fine album, whether you like the movie or
not, and don't be upset by the lack of lyrics
to some of the songs, just kick back and
enjoy the peace that's there.

New Times Tempe, Arizona
Jan. 19, 1976

Dylan's Quiet Depth Charges

In the best of my knowledge, only three
times in the history of popular music has a
group gone into a studio and, in the space
of three or four days, recorded perfor-
mances that have become classics.

The first to do it was Louis Armstrong and
his Hot Five with Kid Ory and Johnny
and Baby Dodds in the late Twenties for Okeh.
These discs rank still as virtuoso perfor-
mances in the classic jazz idiom.

The second group to do this was the
Miles Davis Quintet with John Coltrane
who, at the end of the Fifties, they went
into the studio in New York and cut almost
their entire repertoire for Prestige just prior
to beginning a new recording career with
Columbia Records.

The third, I believe, is the group of per-
formances cut in Los Angeles last fall by
Bob Dylan and The Band, which has just
been released as an Asylum disc titled
Planet Waves.

More Than One Career

Again, like Louis Armstrong and Miles
Davis, Dylan has had more than one career
as an artist. In the beginning he was a
contemporary folk singer, which meant
only that he sang songs applicable to his
time in the style and manner of traditional
folk singers, accompanied only by his own
guitar and harmonica. In that period he
wrote and recorded songs which summed
up the spirit of the Sixties, not the least of

which was the "peace and love" of the
Wicker, normally a political columnist,
noted a week or so ago was close to being
the true anthem of the Peace Movement.

After that period, Dylan made a dramatic
move into singing with a rock band accom-
paniment in the mid-Sixties. When he first
appeared with electric guitars, bass and
the rest, at the Newport Folk Festival, he
was booed and the controversy raged in
folk music publications until Johnny Cash
wrote a short letter to Broadside saying
"Shut up and let him sing!"

Then, with his new musical background
provided by an unknown (at that time) group
of Canadians, who had previously played
with Ronnie Hawkins as The Night Hawks,
Dylan made a coast-to-coast tour and a tour
of Europe. Then, in 1966 he had his close call
with death in a motorcycle accident.

The Band

With Dylan absent from recording or per-
sonal appearances, The Band, as the
group decided to call themselves, went out
on their own and created a body of magnifi-
cent recorded music in a series of
Capitol LPs.

Dylan returned after a little over a year to
make a new album which was a decided
break from his immediately previous work.
This time he used country musicians in
Nashville and songs were no longer almost
exclusively political messages (as they
had been at first) or intense and sometimes
ambiguous poems of memorable imagery.
By and large his return to recording was a
gentle return with some ties to his previous
works but with a new and surprising
sweetness in a set of love songs.

He had always written love songs but the
power and the initial shock of his other
songs had drawn people's attention away
from them and so they were, at least to
some extent, neglected.

Dylan had not recorded for several
years, but his new album, on which The
Band accompanied him, was released to
coincide with his coast-to-coast tour, his
first since 1966. He last appeared here in
December of 1965, incidentally.

The Best Voice

On this album, Dylan is in the best voice
he has ever had for recording, strong, flexi-
ble and displaying new confidence and
new skill. His own guitar and harmonica
playing is more mature now, and the ac-
companiment by The Band is absolutely
the best accompaniment any voice in this
new electronic music has had to date.

The songs are basically love songs with,
here and there, comments on his own life
and collections of the kind of images he
has been noted for. Like many of Dylan's
songs over the years, they grow on you.
Only songs like *Subterranean Homesick
Blues*, *Hard Rain* and *Like a Rolling Stone*
in the past had the quality of instant total
impact, and even those songs (and this is
an indication of the depth of Dylan's work)
grew and expanded in meaning the more
they were heard, as does any true poem.

His new songs come on quietly but leave
a series of depth charges that go off in your
mind later on. They are delicately done
and are contrived with the utmost care.
Despite the studied casualness of Dylan's
concert performances in the past, I have
always been convinced that he was a con-
summate performer in his mask of almost a
nonperformance stance. Certainly a non-
show business stance.

And in his song poems, that studied cas-
ualness was carried by the frequent poet-
ic use of common speech patterns and by
the wry, throwaway, almost off-hand
humor. Dylan has always taken his art se-
riously, but I have always thought he did
not take himself seriously, and that comes
through in the juxtaposition of heavy dra-
matic lines with lighter ones.

Memorable Songs

Dylan's productivity has been amazing
over the years and the incidence of memo-
rable songs the greatest in his generation

by far. I find his early recordings still have
immediacy of impact, whereas the Beatles
and the Stones, for instance, while they
may be delightful to go back to, have
qualities of nostalgia and a kind of out-of-
date feeling to them. Not Dylan.

The new songs are in the same groove.
They are first class examples of the song
poet's art. The Band accompanies him on
all but two of the eleven tracks and there is
plenty of scope for personal favorites.

I have learned from experience that my
favorite performances on albums by Dylan
and The Band have a tendency to switch
around as I go on listening. At the moment I
am in love with *Something There Is About
You*, a truly moving love, song and *Tough
Mama*, a classic combination of Dylan's
imagery and a hard rock beat.

There seems to me no question but what
these songs will rank with this best work,
S. F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle
This World, Sunday Feb. 10, 1974

Ralph J. Gleason

Bobby Dylan's Impact Cannot Be Overestimated

Richard Campion, an associate profes-
sor of English at Mt. St. Mary College,
Newburgh, is a self-confessed Bob
Dylan "freak."

Like many young persons who reached
maturity during the past decade, he feels
Dylan's impact on the 1960s can't be
overestimated.

"At the very least, he tells us where
we've been going for the past 15 years," the
34-year-old college professor says.

He noted Dylan's songs sparked and sen-
sitized thousands of young Americans, as
well as mirroring their growing disillusion
with the "American Dream."

For Campion, Dylan is more than an en-
tertainer. He's an artist. "I find him one of
the most interesting and best American
writers of the last 15 years," he says.

Campion recently had an opportunity to
communicate some of his enthusiasm for
the singer-composer by teaching a semi-
nar on his work at Mt. St. Mary College.
The seminar was on modern poetry, and
Campion chose Dylan as the author to be
studied.

He acknowledges this choice drew some
"raised eyebrows" from people who re-
sisted the notion that a "pop singer" can be
studied as a serious artist.

But, Campion notes: "Dylan is not just a
singer, he's a songwriter-poet. Many other
schools offer a course on his work. People
are beginning to realize he has something to
say."

Campion calls Dylan "a modern Amer-
ican romantic" whose songs, ranging from
social protest songs to more intimate songs
about love, melancholy, rage, and regret,
expanded the limits of popular music.

"I like his intensity of expression, and
his wonderful allusions and imagery. He
also writes satirical songs. He writes about
what people have always felt," the profes-
sor says.

Campion compares Dylan to other ro-
mantic poets, such as Walt Whitman and
William Blake, and he truly believes there
is a comparison.

"It shouldn't surprise people in this day
and age that some of the greatest artistic
figures are coming out of the mass media.
People talk about the latest Bergman and
Fellini movies at intellectual cocktail par-
ties, as much as they talk about books,"
he says.

The seminar concentrated on Dylan's ly-
rics. Students studied his songs chro-
nologically from the time he exploded onto
the music scene in the early 1960s to today.

Campion says his intention was to show
how Dylan's work mirrored and affected
his times, and also how his themes are
"universal." Besides this, he wanted to
point out Dylan's imaginative use of ima-
gery and free verse.

Dylan's impact on the 1960s has gone through three dis-
tinct phases, Campion believes.

—First, a "social commentary" phase in
the early 1960s when Dylan wrote biting
folk songs about war, bigotry and social
injustice. The songs became anthems of
the civil rights and anti-war move-
ments and changed many people's con-
sciousnesses.

—Then, a "personal statement" phase
lasting roughly from the time he switched
to electronic rock and roll to his motorcycle
accident in 1966. Although personal, these
songs, filled with surrealistic epigrams
and metaphysical subtleties, reflected the
social disorientation and turmoil of the
late 1960s. They expressed "a nightmare
vision of present society."

—Finally, his current phase that is
basically a fusion of the social commen-
tary and personal statement phases. This
is most evident in two of Dylan's most re-
cent albums, *Desire* and *Blood on the
Tracks*, Campion says.

(Dylan also recorded two "country" al-
bums, *Nashville Skyline* and *New Morn-
ing*, in the late 1960s which Campion feels
are, by far, his worst work lyrically.)

"Some people never forgave him for stop-
ping writing protest songs and changing
over to rock and roll. He's constantly being
criticized by a lot of people for not being
what they want him to be. But, like a true
romantic, he's followed his own path,"
Campion says.

He notes one reason he has become such
a Dylan enthusiast is his "style and humor"
and his refusal to be "pigeon-holed" as an
artist, despite the disapproval of some crit-
ics and fans who cannot accept the fact
he's changed.

"Even when I started to listen to him he
seemed like a non-conforming type of a
person who always seemed to speak with
his own voice," Campion says.

As part of the seminar, Campion says he
had students write a paper tracing Dylan's
writing on a particular topic or explaining
how another author influenced his work.
The students also had to write a paper
expounding on author Pete Hamill's state-
ment: "When our innocence died forever,
Bob Dylan made that moment into art."

Dylan is still "a big favorite" with today's
college students, although more think of
him as an entertainer than an artist,
Campion says.

One interesting point for those who lived
through the civil rights and anti-war move-
ments of the 1960s, Campion notes, is that
he had to explain the "historical back-
ground" of Dylan's early protest songs to
make them understandable to today's col-
lege students.

As for the future, Campion doesn't see
Dylan burning himself out, although he
acknowledges his latest album, *Hard Rain*,
is far from his best work.

"If Dylan is lucky, he might live to see
himself really appreciated by the intellec-
tual community.

"I'm eagerly awaiting his next album. It
would have to be at least interesting."

George Bazler
Evening News, Newburgh, N.Y.
May 1, 1977

Dylan Sings Of Lovers, Losers

John Wesley Hardin was a Texas gambler
and gunman of the 19th century, who, like
folk outlaws from Robin Hood to Bonnie
and Clyde, befriended the downtrodden.

John Wesley Hardin is the title song of a
new album by Bob Dylan, a Minnesota
gambler, musician and writer, who, just as
a lot of folk heroes, startles, mystifies and
charms the poor as well as the gentry. The
album (Columbia CL 2804; stereo CS 9604),
Dylan's first major new work since *Blonde
on Blonde* of October, 1966, is quietly revo-
lutionary, marking still another stylistic
shift and further philosophic change for
the ever-moving Dylan.

The new LP has a unity that has not characterized any previous album by the 26-year-old folk poet. Nearly all the dozen songs are linked into a pageant about life's outsiders: gunmen, renegades, immigrants, tenants, saints, hobos, drifter-convicts, lovers and losers. The alienated have all gone to register with Dylan, who treats them with considerably more compassion and understanding than they might get from our harsh and judgmental society.

In the fabric of his own life, Bob Dylan has always been fascinated with the outsider, as if the writer were a gardener of the flowers of evil. As a child, he was drawn to a black-sheep relative who worked in a gambling casino. Later, he was more at home on the wrong side of his home-town's racks than on his own side; while still later, he was irresistibly drawn to the rebel, the disenfranchised Negro, the misfit in American life.

These alienated types are treated by the song-writer with more compassion than has been in evidence in Dylan's work since his *Times, They Are A'Changin'* album. If the dozen songs here can be treated as a unity, you might say that Dylan is trying to construct a religion without a church, a world-view without a dogma, an esthetic without a label. If such a set of complex vignettes can be characterized in a summary statement, Dylan is saying, or rather, asking: Who are we to judge what is right or wrong, who is respectable and who is the outcast?

Although the album occasionally grins with its writer-singer's especial brand of whimsy, this is a serious work. With touches of rock 'n' roll, country and Western, blues and free-form material, it remains primarily a folk-music album. Although more communicative and direct than *Blonde On Blonde*, the LP demands considerable attention. You may expect an initial let-down, in this period of sensation-overwhelming sensibility in music, because it is so low-key in mood and tempo.

Ever the individualist, Dylan has abruptly returned, if only momentarily, to folk music. It will be a delight to watch some of the lemmings of pop music stop short in their tracks and try to guess which way to run now. It will further amuse this observer to watch the folk reactionaries who have begrudgingly accepted rock 'n' roll, now start to do philosophic pirouettes.

Of course, to evaluate a Dylan, or a Beatles, album solely on whether or not it has a predominating rock beat is approaching youth-music on its most puerile basis. Similarly, it seems to me, to try to evaluate Dylan in the face of his mystique or the mystique others have built around him is succumbing to adolescent standards. Bob Dylan has been in voluntary seclusion since he returned from a world tour in July, 1965. The effects of a motorcycle accident he was involved in have been distorted out of all realistic proportion. Understanding the information explosion better than many of its practitioners, he keeps quiet and keeps generating news by doing so.

Not that Dylan doesn't enjoy playing his little games of obscurantism. With characteristic slyness, Dylan elected to add an extra "g" to Hardin's name. Perhaps, suffering guilt after all his years of singin', talkin', mumblin' and tumblin' his way through Great Plains orthography, Dylan has decided to repay his debt to American spelling. The album covers, front and back, are also teasers aimed at what he knows is a curiosity cult. He is photographed with two of the Baul Singers of West Bengal, India, along with a local workman.

On the back of the jacket Dylan has written one of his abstract essays that sound like a fragment from his suspended first book "Tarantula." And, inevitably, while

some of his songs are perfectly comprehensible, others are clear on one level only. They are still protecting the writer's real meaning, and therefore, feeling.

In purely musical terms, the album strongly reflects the relaxed singing of a star who got away from the rat-race of international concert-giving and the enervating demands of egocentric audiences. His voice has that warm and buoyant quality associated with the best of Nashville recording, where the three sessions in October that produced this recording obviously were held. The understated backing by three veteran Nashville sidemen is superbly relevant and helpful. Behind nearly all of Dylan's albums, there is a discernible "ghost singer," whose recent influence seems to be infusing the singer with inspiration. Those have included Woody Guthrie, Buddy Holly, Ray Charles and Chuck Berry. On *John Wesley Harding*, the ghost singer is the late Hank Williams, "the hillbilly Shakespeare," who called himself Luke the Drifter and who sang of mockingbirds and sorrow.

Here are a few thought-starters about the songs on the album. Since this will be predictably one of the most-discussed works of the season, let me throw these preliminary thoughts on the fire:

John Wesley Harding: Built vaguely upon the melodic structure of *Cottonfields Back Home*, this modern-day Robin Hood ballad is appealing, but flawed. Although Dylan pretends to know more about freight trains than quatrains, the lyrics are annoyingly synoptic and should be developed.

As I Went Out One Morning: A brilliant comment on political commitment, to a melody reminiscent of both *Old Tom Moore* and to that Joan Baez favorite, *John Riley*. A conversational football for campus activists.

I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine: A new mysticism for Dylan, alternately religious and agnostic, in which St. Augustine replaces the union martyr, Joe Hill. Considering what each stood for, this is quite a philosophical leap for the writer, although he may leave many on the old shore.

All Along the Watchtower: A surrealistic riddle stated in musically intense terms. Perhaps it is only word-play in view of its own epigram: "...Many here among us who feel that life is but a joke."

Drifter's Escape: Chilling view of a Kafkaesque trial in which there is divine intercession to save a drifter convict from a sensation-hungry jury audience.

Dear Landlord: Conceivably a memo to Dylan's manager about their estrangement. On a broader level, a song about responsibility and work relationships.

I Am a Lonesome Hobo: A moral tale in blues form, about trust and jealousy.

I Pity the Poor Immigrant: To the beautiful waltz melody of *Peter Ambergly*, this A "social song" offers a set of contradictions about the contradictory country in which we live.

The Wicked Messenger: Musically, the most arresting track on the album. Dylan's hortatory voice against a descending blues figure on guitar, sets up incredible tension. Biblical undertones and angry overtones combine with forceful impact.

The album closes with two love-game songs. One of them, *Down Along the Cove* is a playful blues we can expect to hear in a variety of rock arrangements. The other, *I'll Be Your Baby Tonight*, a sort of sprightly visitation from Hank Williams, ambles and flows lazily and sensuously. Dylan here quite consciously rhymes "moon" and "spoon," which is about the only conventional thing he has said in any of his eight LP albums.

Robert Shelton
New York Times
January 14, 1968

Nashville Skyline

Bob Dylan's ninth album poses fewer mysteries and yet, paradoxically, offers greater rewards than any of his previous works. Its only difficulties aren't metaphysical or interpretative—indeed, the beauty and openness within is kept almost rigorously simple in genre—but rather those of taking the artist's new-found happiness and maturity for exactly what they appear to be. That smiling face on the cover tells all—and isn't it wonderful?

Most obviously, *Nashville Skyline* continues Dylan's rediscovered romance with rural music (here complete with a more suitable, subtle "country" voice). The new LP represents a natural progression, both historically and emotionally, from the folk-music landscapes of *John Wesley Harding* into the more modern country- and western worlds of Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers, and Jerry Lee Lewis.

In *Harding*, Dylan superimposed a vision of intellectual complexity onto the warm, inherent mysticism of Southern Mountain music, rather like certain French directors (especially Jean-Luc Godard) who have taken American gangster movies and added to them layers of 20th-century philosophy. The effect is not unlike Jean-Paul Sartre playing the five-string banjo. The folk element gains a Kafkaesque chimericality, and the philosophy a bedrock simplicity that leaves it all but invisible and thus easy to assimilate. *Down Along the Cove* and *I'll Be Your Baby Tonight*, exceptions to the above and the record's last two songs, are almost a microcosm of the geography to come.

Nashville Skyline is a jewel or construction with three distinct beginnings. The much-anticipated guitar-and-vocal duet with Johnny Cash, a stately and beautiful rendition of *Girl from the North Country*, is a thoughtful bonus to the listener, a musical postcard to an old Minnesota love, and a reminder that Dylan has always been capable of tenderness. The song's most painful verse—"Many times I've often prayed/In the darkness of my night"—has been deleted here.

The second beginning—or, if you prefer, an intermission in which each performer gets a chance to solo—*Nashville Skyline Rag*, serves as an instrumental introduction to the album's excellent personnel: Kenny Butterly, Charlie McCoy, Pete Drake, Norman Blake, Charlie Daniels, and Bob Wilson. It's country music at its joyful, shift-kicking best.

Dylan finally announces the LP's "real" beginning, *To Be Alone With You*, when he asks producer Bob Johnston, "Is it rolling, Bob?" Unlike the Beatles, he may not want to take us home with him, but he makes it quite clear that what follows should be viewed as a personal confrontation: "Everything is always all right/When I'm alone with you."

I Threw It All Away, the first of the record's three classic love songs, couples a haunting melody and magnificent singing to the hard-won realization that "Love is all we need/It makes the world go round." In contradiction to the earlier *It Ain't Me, Babe*,

Dylan, cast as someone who has formerly tried to do without deep affection, now wants very much to be "A lover for your life and nothing more." This is clearly going to be an album of staying, not leaving.

A good-natured exercise in country word-play ("Love to spend the night with Peggy Day... Love to spend the day with Peggy Night"), complete with a Presley rave-up finale, *Peggy Day* represents two delightful sides of one ideal woman; or maybe two delightful women, each with one ideal side. "By golly, what more can I say!"

Side two begins with another classic. *Lay Lady Lay* has the organ sound of *Highway 61* Dylan, and the lyrics are not as stringently genre-bound. "Whatever colors you have in mind/I'll show them to you and you'll see them shine" is more a metaphorical leap than a naturalistic hop, while "His clothes are dirty/But his hands are clean" seems a self-conscious attempt to needlessly bring it all back home.

One More Night and Tell Me That It Isn't True are My-baby-left-me songs, but, as is befitting the structures of country music, there is little or no bitterness, and Dylan even calls one of the girls his "best pal." The former, with its "Tonight, no light will shine on me" line, echoes the "dark side of the road" imagery of *Don't Think Twice*, but its protagonist, unlike the hero of *It Ain't Me, Babe*, can only mournfully state, "I just could not be/What she wanted me to be." The latter bears a superficial resemblance to *Positively 4th Street* in that the singer has been put down strongly by someone dear to him. Rather than rage, the reaction here is a gentle "Darling, I'm counting on you/Tell me that it isn't true."

In some ways, the final song of the LP should logically be *Country Pie*, an unabashed tribute to country music ("Love that country pie!") and a clear statement of Dylan's present credo: "Ain't running any race/Get me my country pie/I won't throw it up in anybody's face."

As with *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, *Nashville Skyline* saves the best until last. *Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You* fuses personal commitment with professional preference, and functions as a sort of very content *A Day in the Life*. Musically, it's brilliant, with a powerful Jerry Lee Lewis stride piano leading the way. Although the symbolism is hobo-traditional, the *mise-en-scene* of melody, lyrics, and performance overpowers and explodes any genre limitations in a glorious flow of every sort of imaginable triumph.

Perhaps, after all, it is more difficult to convey meaningfully a total fulfillment of marriage and family life than it is to create a nightmare world of complex hallucination, even though the latter seems more painfully our own. In many ways, *Nashville Skyline* achieves the artistically impossible: a deep, humane, and interesting statement about being happy.

It could well be what Dylan thinks it is, his best album.

Paul Nelson
Rolling Stone
May 31, 1969





BOB DYLAN	<i>Guitar, Harmonica & Vocals</i>
BILLY CROSS	<i>Guitar</i>
IAN WALLACE	<i>Drums</i>
ALAN PASQUA	<i>Keyboards</i>
JERRY SCHEFF	<i>Bass</i>
STEVEN SOLES	<i>Guitar & Vocals</i>
DAVID MANSFIELD	<i>Pedal Steel, Violin & Mandolin</i>
STEVE DOUGLAS	<i>Saxophone, Flute & Recorder</i>
BOBBYE HALL	<i>Percussion</i>
HELENA SPRINGS	<i>Vocals</i>
JO ANN HARRIS	<i>Vocals</i>
CAROLYN DENNIS	<i>Vocals</i>
<i>Management</i>	JERRY WEINTRAUB MANAGEMENT III
<i>Production Supervision</i>	PATRICK STANSFIELD ASSOCIATES, INC. NEW YORK, NEW YORK
<i>Public Relations</i>	PAUL WASSERMAN MAHONEY-WASSERMAN BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA
<i>Design Consultants</i>	LEO BONAMY/JOHN LILLY CALIFORNIA ART LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
<i>Sound Contractor</i>	STANAL SOUND LTD. KEARNEY, NEBRASKA
<i>Accounting</i>	GELFAND, BRESLAUER, MACNOW, RENNERT & FELDMAN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
<i>Program Design</i>	KOSH & CO. HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA
<i>European Lighting Equipment & Production Services</i>	TFA ELECTRO SOUND, LTD. LONDON, ENGLAND
<i>European Travel Consultant</i>	VSI TRAVEL OF LONDON, LTD. LONDON, ENGLAND
<i>European Trucking</i>	EDWIN SHIRLEY TRUCKING, LTD. CRANBROOK, KENT, ENGLAND

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Bob Dylan - Ins Auge des Hurrican

Es ist ein schneefreies Julinacht in Greenwich Village. Die Stammkunden stehen an der Bar - noch zwei Drinks und dann wollen sie nach Hause zu Bett gehen. Auf einmal steht Bob Dylan an der Bar. Eine verbeulte Lederjacke über einem gemalten 7-Shirt, zerzaustes Haar und die Spuren von zwei schlaflosen Nächten im Gesicht. Er lässt sich auf einen Barhocker fallen und bestellt einen Drink, Tequila Gold. Sofort umdrängen ihn die späten Gäste. Er wird gesprochen: "Wir haben gerade einen neuen Song geschrieben." Er zieht aus der Tasche ein Stück Papier und beginnt eine seltsam faszinierende Ballade zu zitieren: "Ich habe Iris als 5. Mal geheiratet - aber ich konnte sie nicht lange halten - da schnitt ich mir langes Haar ab und ritt in ein unbekanntes Land - wo ich nichts falsch machen konnte..." Er singt noch 5 Minuten und alle hören gebannt zu. Als er fertig ist, Stille, dann lauter Beifall. Dylan ischelt und bestellt sich noch einen Tequila Gold - diesmal einen doppelten.

Eine Anekdote aus den 60er Jahren, wo sich Dylan, der Post der Strasse, in den Bars von Greenwich Village herumtrieb, um Atmosphäre aufzusaugen? Nein - es ist 1975 nicht 1962, und Dylan und Co-Texter Jacques Levy feiern und singen bis tief in die Nacht in jener Bar an Jenes schwülen Sommerabend und die Songs, die sie singen, sollten später, noch im selben Jahr, auf der LP 'Desire' erscheinen.

Der Dylan des Jahres 1976 ist voller Energie - er schreibt Songs, er geht auf Tournee - er ist eine sprudelnde Quelle der Poesie - ein Leuchtturm, der die Wahrheit durch die heissen Nächte verkündet! Dylan ist wieder da - als ob er nie wanders gewesen sei - und wie zuvor ist er an der Spitze!

Instinktiver Überlebensdrang ist der Schluessel zur Karriere dieses jungen Mannes aus Minnesota. Er steht nun schon seit über einem Jahrzehnt im Rampenlicht und hat überlebt, wo tausende von Rock Stars nur noch Schatten der Vergangenheit sind. Aber es war ein harter Weg zum Gipfel! Von den Slums in East Village zum Superstar, der fast schon automatisch mit jeder Single einen Hit erzielt.

Larry Sloman 1&2 C 1975 Ram's Horn Music

Bob Dylan - Balladen unserer Zeit

Es gibt wohl kaum ein besseres Zeichen der Zeit, als dies, dass viele unserer jungen Leute begeisterte Bob Dylan Fans sind und seinen pessimistischen Balladen belistimen. Dieser blasse, schwächliche Saenger schreibt Lieder, die so wirklichkeitsnah und so aktuell sind, wie der Schuss, der Medgar Evers tötete oder die Armut, die Hollis Brown dazu trieb, sich selbst, seine Frau und seine 5 Kinder umzubringen.

Dylan ist wie ein griechischer Chor, der unsere Sünden, unsere Arroganz und unsere Voreingenommenheit ausspricht und uns warnt, dass die Götter die Menschheit fuer wesentlich geringere Sünden bestraft hat.

Sein neues Album 'The Times That Are A Changin' (Columbia GL 2105) ist sein aggressivstes bisher. Und als solches präsentiert es sich seinen Anhängern, die Dylan zum erfolgreichsten Saenger und Lyriker der heutigen Folkmusik gemacht haben, als eine Art Herausforderung an ihre Loyalität. Diese 10 Balladen greifen unsere Zeit und unsere Einstellung an und klagen uns der folgenden Sünden an: Heuchelei, Grausamkeit, Voreingenommenheit und vielleicht die schlimmste aller - Gleichgültigkeit. Diese Anklagen sind formuliert in den besten Balladen, die Dylan bisher geschrieben hat - direktes unverschöntes Erzählen bis zum unvermeidlichen bitteren Ende.

Zugegeben, sein Stil ist schwer zu akzeptieren fuer alle die, die bisher nur mit Popmusik konfrontiert wurden. Seine Stimme ist flach, er raselt und variiert kaum seine Tonlage. Er hat seine Begleitinstrumente, Gitarre und Mundharmonika, zu einem Skelett von Akkorden reduziert. Aber - er hat seinen eigenen und unverkennbaren Stil, der zu diesem rohen, ausgesprochenen Material passt.

Es ist möglich, dass ihn so mancher angreifen wird - mit welchem Recht er sich aus Gewissen der heutigen Generation mache! Er sei schliesslich erst 21 Jahre alt, habe gerade erst sein College absolviert und ziehe sich an wie ein Beatinik! Jedoch ausser Talent, Einfühlungsvermögen, einer sensitiven dichterischen Natur und der Reifeitfertigkeit seiner Anklagen braucht er keine Qualifikationen - sondern hat er das Recht gehört zu werden!!!

Die Ballade 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' (Der einsame Tod der Hattie Carroll) ist kaum mehr als eine einfache Reportage ueber diesen 'Ford in Maryland. Hattie Carroll, eine Frau mittleren Alters, Mutter von 11 Kindern, arbeitete in einer Bar als Bedienung. Sie wurde von grobschichtigen John einer einflussreichen weissen Familie zu Tode gepörselt, weil sie nicht schnell genug seine Bestellung ausgeführt hatte. Die Marylander Gerichtshof bestand darin, dass er fuer schuldig befunden und zu 6 Monaten Gefängnis verurteilt wurde. Dylan erzielt mit dieser einfachen Erzählung eine drastische Wirkung. Die vorliegende Stimmlichkeit einer tragischen Handlung und die unterherzige Notlage eines Mannes werden in 'The Ballad of Hollis Brown' (Die Ballade des Hollis Brown) erzählt. Nachdem dieser arme Bauer aus Sued Dakota sich und seine gesamte Familie ermordet hat, beendet Dylan das Lied mit einer Zeile, die dieses schreckliche Schicksal noch unterstreicht: "... Irrendes in der Fremde werden jetzt wieder 7 Kinder geboren..."

Diese zwei Balladen sind die besten der 45-Minuten langen LP. Aber auch mit 'North Country Blues', 'With God on Our Side' und 'Only A Pawn in Their Game' hat Dylan etwas zu sagen.

Joseph Haus Chicago, Ill. News 7. Maerz 1974

Desire - Die Leute stehen Schlange!

Es passiert wirklich nicht oft, dass ein Album so vielversprechend ist, dass sich Leute stundenlang anstellen, um sofort eine Kopie zu bekommen. In Meridian war dies jedoch letzte Woche der Fall, als Bob Dylans neueste LP 'Desire' herauskam. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt gab es in der ganzen Stadt nur 6 Kopien und diese waren innerhalb von wenigen Sekunden verkauft. Ich habe Glück gehabt und ich muss gestehen, ich koennte mir kein besseres Album zur Besprechung ausgesucht haben!

Ich will Punkt fuer Punkt erläutern: Zuerst seine ausgezeichnete Band - Rolling Thunder - die folgende Mitglieder hat: Scarlett Rivera/Geige, Rob Stoner/Bass, Howie Wyeth/Schlagzeug und Emmy Lou Harris/Backup Saengerin. Man kann sie gar nicht genug loben, diese Band - einzeln sind sie alle Meister ihres Fachs und zusammen ergaenzen sie sich fabelhaft! Miss Rivera ist ein Juwel - Dylan soll sie anscheinend auf den Strassen New Yorks gefunden haben, wo sie tanzend mit ihrer Geige unterm Arm herumspazierte - eine reizende Geschichte, aber kann ernst zu nehmen, wenn man schon mal in New York war. Sie ist jedoch eine ausgezeichnete Geigerin, indes sie Dylans musikalische Passagen geschickt unterstreicht und damit sehr viel zum allgemeinen Sound beiträgt. Wyeth und Stone, die fuer den Beat verantwortlich sind, ist eines der besten Teams, das ich je gehoert habe - immer auf Draht, genau auf Dylans verzeissende Lyrik abgestimmt.

Im Nachhinein ausserdem drei weitere Kuenstler einen Gastauftritt in Song 'Hurricane': Ronnie 'Nashville' Haskley und Steve Soles als Backup-Saenger und Luther Hix/Congas. Da alle mehr oder weniger diesen Song, Dylans neueste Single, bereits kennen, brauche ich nicht zu erlaeuern, wie gut diese drei darauf sind.

Insgesamt besteht das Album aus 9 Liedern - eines so individuell wie das andere und wie nur Dylan sie schreiben kann!

Obwohl es das letzte Lied auf der Platte ist, finde ich 'Sara' das wichtigste. Dylan legt darueber seine Seele bloss, was bisher nie der Fall war. Er schreibt dieses Lied fuer seine Frau. Es gleicht einem wunderschönen Tagebuch, gefüllt mit seinen tiefsten Gedanken. Wer dachte schon, dass er jemalszugeben wurde, er hatte 'Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands' fuer seine Frau geschrieben, dieses gehelmsamwiltierte Wesen, von der wir erst jetzt etwas sehr wissen. 'Sara' wurde von einem gefuehlvollen Kuenstler geschrieben.

Auf der gleichen Linie wie 'Hurricane' liegt 'Joey', ein Lied, mit dem Dylan die menschliche Seite des beruehten und beruechtigten 'Bossen Dubois', JoeyGallo, zeigt. Es ist eine lange Geschichte und eines meiner Lieblingslieder. Dylans Stimme hat genau den richtigen Tonfall und Miss Harris blendet harmonisch ein.

'Romance In Durango' und 'Black Diamond Bay' kaempfen um den besseren Platz. Der erste Song ist stark spanisch angehaucht und koennte fuer 'Pat Garrett und Billy The Kid' geschrieben worden sein. Der zweite erzahlt eine unwirkliche Geschichte mit leicht amüsierten Unterton. Das vielleicht interessanteste daran kommt am Ende des Liedes, wo Dylan alles herumdreht und uns den Inhalt so praesentiert, als ob wir uns in den Nachrichten angeschaut haetten, - ein Hauch von Dylan der 60er Jahre!!!

Aberundend wird die LP durch 'Iris' - eine Ode auf die Frau aller Frauen, 'Mozambique'

und 'One More Cup Of Coffee' - zwei Songs im neuen Dylan Stil und schliesslich 'Oh Sister',
einem ernsthaften Lied mit religiösem Unterton.

Allen Ginsberg, Co-Direktor der Jack Kerouac Schule fuer korperbetonte Dichter schrieb
den Text fuer die LP-Huelle und deklariert die Platte zum Album der Aufrechterhaltung. Ich
persoenlich glaube, dass Bob Dylan nie 'gestorben' ist, sollte dies jedoch der Fall
gewesen sein, so hat ihn dieses Album bestimmt wieder zurueckgebracht! Eine ausgezeichnete
LP, die meiner Meinung nach mehr schwierig zu ueberbieten sein wird.

Betty Hanner Meridian Star 18. Januar 1976

Dylan - Der Poet

"Ich muss immer von dem, was mich bewegt und was ich erlebt habe, ein neues Lied schreiben"
- Bob Dylan,

Der wichtigste Punkt in Bob Dylans Karriere ist der, dass er zuallererst ein Dichter ist
und immer war, der naechste, dass sein dramatisches Genie auf seine ganz eigene und eigen-
tuehmliche Art und Weise einen Weg gefunden hat, sich sowohl musikalisch wie auch lyrisch
auszudruecken.

Dylans Ziel- zuerst unbewusst, aber nun mit vollen Bewusstsein - ist es, eine neue Art
Dichtung aus den Elementen der Musik zu kreieren - ein kuemstlerisches Ideal, das schon
viele vor ihm angestrebt haben. Er hat einmal gesagt: "Es ist sehr schwierig, sich in
einem Lied frei zu bewegen - alles hineinschreiben, was man sagen will. Lieder eignen
ein. Woody Guthrie sagte mir einmal, dass sich der Text nicht zu reinen braucht - aber
das stimmt nicht. Ein Lied braucht eine bestimmte Formel um zur Musik zu passen - Worte
sind elastisch, muessen aber trotzdem passen! Ich bin heute viel freier geworden in
meinen Texten, aber dennoch fuehle ich mich noch immer eingeengt. Deswegen schreibe ich
viele Gedichte - wenn man sie als solches bezeichnen kann. Als Dichter ist man frei."

Das Jahr 1965 war entscheidend fuer Bob Dylans Karriere. In seinen fruheren Liedern
hat er versucht, mit konventionellen Mitteln den 'Folkrock' aus Folk-Rock zu machen.
Diese Experimente waren von grosser Bedeutung fuer ihn. Durch sie ist er auf langsame
Wege zum eigentlichen Ziel seiner Musik gekommen, frei von etablierten Konzepten und
immer ueberzeugter, dass er es nur auf bisher Unbeschrifteten Pfaden erreichen konnte.

Mit Liedern wie 'Like a Rolling Stone' und 'Desolation Row' hat er diesen Durchbruch
geschafft und damit den konventionellen Folk-Saenger abgestreift.

Bob Dylans Veraenderung in seiner Einstellung zur Volksmusik nach 1964 und die dadurch
neu erworbene Freiheit und Selbststaendigkeit seines Genies loeste einen Sturm der
unterschiedlichsten Meinungen aus.

Cerard Malanga

Bob Dylans Einfluss kann nicht genug betont werden!

Richard Campion, Professor fuer Englisch an der Universitaet Mt. St. Mary College in
Newburgh, N.Y., deklariert sich selbst zum absoluten Dylan Verehrer. Wie so viele
junge Leute, die in den 60er Jahren aufgewachsen sind, meint er, dass Dylans Einfluss
in diesen Jahren nicht genug betont werden kann. "Er hat uns die Augen geoeffnet und uns
eine Richtung angedehnt, in diesen letzten 15 Jahren", meint der 34-jaehrige Professor.
Ausserdem hat er tausenden von jungen Amerikanern aus der Seele gesprochen, die den
'Amerikanischen Traum' mit wachsender Skepsis und Enttauschung betrachten.

Fuer Richard Campion ist Dylan viel mehr als ein Saenger - er ist ein Kuemstler! "Ich
finde ihn einen der besten amerikanischen Dichter/Lyriker der letzten 15 Jahre", sagt er.

Erst kuemstlich konnte Campion seine Begeisterung fuer Dylan mit einer Studie ueber
moderne Dichtung verbinden, die das Mt. St. Mary College unternahm, indem er seine
Studenten ueber Dylan schreiben liess. Es gab ein paar zerstreute Namen von Leuten, die
einen Rock-Saenger keineswegs als einen ernstzunehmenden Dichter betrachteten. Campion
jedoch verteidigte seine Wahl: "Dylan ist nicht nur ein Saenger, sondern ein Lyriker
und vor allen Dingen ein Poet! Viele Schulen haben seine Werke bereits in Lernprogrammen.
Langsam merkt man, dass er wirklich etwas zu sagen hat!" Campion meint, Dylan sei ein

romantisch moderner Amerikaner, dessen Lieder, vom Protestsong bis zur sensiblen Ballade
ueber Liebe, Enttauschung und Melancholie, die Grenzen der allgemeinen Formmusik weit
ueberschreiten. "Seine Wahl der Worte, seine einmalige Fantasie und seine art und we-
se mit sich angehauchten Texte sprechen das aus, was jungen Leuten am Herzen liegt." Campion
vergleicht Dylan in allem Ernst mit solchen anderen romantischen Dichtern wie Walt Whitman
und William Blake.

Man sollte nicht ueberrascht sein, dass einige der grosssten Kuemstler unserer Zeit aus
dem Bereich der 'Leichten Muse' stammen - man spricht schliesslich auf intellektuellen
Cocktail Parties nicht nur ueber Neuausgaben und deren Autoren, sondern auch ueber
Bertrams und Fellinis neueste Filme."

Die Studie ueber Dylan befasste sich mit seinen Liedertexten, von den ersten Eindruecken,
die er auf der Musikszene Anfang der 60er Jahre hinterliess, bis zum heutigen Tag. Campion
wollte damit zeigen, wie Dylans Werke seine Zeit widerspiegeln und sie beeinflussen
haben, und wie 'unvergleichlich' sie sind. Sie sind ausserdem noch ein Beispiel einfallsreicher
freier Dichtung.

Er meint, in Dylans Werke seien drei verschiedene Phasen zu entdecken: Erstens - 'Sozialer
Kommentar' Anfang der 60er Jahre, als Dylan Folkongs ueber den Krieg, die Heuchelei und
Ungerechtigkeit schrieb. Sie wurden zum Banner der Gegner des Krieges und der Verteidiger
der Menschenrechte und pochten am Gewissen vieler. Darauf folgte eine Phase des 'Persoen-
lichen Ausdrucks', die mit Dylans Umstieg zum Elektro-Rock anfang und mit seinem Motorrad-
unfall in 1966 endete. Die Lieder dieser Zeit, obwohl sehr persoenlich, waren voll von
surrealistischen Texten, metaphysischen Untertönen und drueckten die soziale Verwirrung
der spaten 60er Jahre aus. Zum Schluss - die jetzige Phase - eine Mischung der beiden
ersten! Dies wird auf den letzten zwei LPs deutlich - 'Desire' und 'Blood On The Tracks'.
(Dylan hatte ausserdem Ende '60 zwei Country LPs aufgenommen - 'Nashville Skyline' und
'New Morning', die Campion als lyrisch ausserordentlich schlecht bezeichnet.) "Es gibt
Leute, die es Dylan nie vergeben haben, dass er von Protestliedern auf Rock 'N Roll umge-
stiegen ist. Er wird laufend kritisiert, geht jedoch wie ein wahrer Romantiker seinen
eigenen Weg."

Einer der Gruende, die Campion von Dylan ueberzeugt haben, ist sein persoenlicher Stil und
Humor und sein Widerstreben, sich als Kuemstler kategorisieren zu lassen, trotz der Kritik
vieler Fans, die nicht akzeptieren wollen, dass er sich veraendert hat. "Diese Charakter-
zuege fielen mir schon ganz am Anfang seiner Karriere auf," meint Campion.

Teil der Studie befasste sich mit der Struktur eines aktuellen Dylan-Liedes und des
eventuellen Einflusses anderer Autoren auf Dylan. Die Studenten muessen ausserdem
folgende Aussage von Pete Hamill erlaeuern: "Als unsere Unschuld fuer immer zerstört
war - verewigte Bob Dylan diesen Moment in der Kunst."

Dylan ist auch heute noch ein Favorit unter den Studenten - jedoch mehr als Saenger.
Campion muss heute seinen jungen Studenten den Hintergrund zu den Geschehnissen der
60er Jahre erklaren, mit denen sich Dylans Protestlieder befassen. Er glaubt, dass
Dylan auch in Zukunft etwas zu sagen haben wird, obwohl sein letztes Album, 'Hard Rain',
bei weitem nicht sein bestes war. "Dylan wird moeglicherweise noch zu seinen Lebzeiten
von der intellektuellen Gesellschaft voll anerkannt werden. Ich persoenlich erwarte
mit Neugier sein neues Album."

George Sasler Evening News, Newburgh, N.Y. 1. Mai 1977

Uebersetzung: Gabriel R. Sneddon 1978