

Freewheelin-on-line Take Twenty Two



Coverdown

Freewheelin' 220

There can be no question: it is a cinematic masterpiece; a milestone in the history of moving images. I am talking about Peter Jackson's 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy, and, despite the multiple endings to the final part of the trilogy - 'The Return of the King' - nothing is lost when you consider the totality of the project. I couldn't thus resist from having that half-man, half-beast and totally schizophrenic creature Gollum in the fore ground of this month's cover.

It seems that another king is going to return in 2004. It will be 50 years ago next year, in 1954, that Elvis sauntered into the studio and recorded 'That's All Right' which many consider to be the big bang of rock and roll. So expect the usual anniversary celebrations and reports of sightings of the King by shepherds on hillsides and wise men from the north. My sighting of Elvis is taken from the famous 1963 screen print of the legend by Andy Warhol.

For every king there must be a queen and who else but Marilyn could equal the iconic status of Elvis? This collage is taken from a study by the artist Mimmo Rotella, completed in 1962, a year of Marilyn's death.

Whilst Elvis is trying to gun Gollum down and Dylan looks inquisitively at the unheavenly creature, Marilyn just wants to take him home and cover him in kisses. Diamonds may be easily had and they may be a girl's best friend but, for a Steptoe Senior lookalike who prefers thongs to Y-fronts, there's nothing quite like a search of middle-earth for a golden ring to complete your set. Is there, my precious?

Freewheelin-on-line take twenty two (freewheelin 220)



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	Distance	Audio	Steadiness	Heads	Focus	Image
1	1/2 screen	1	Not in pic	80%	No pic !	L=left
2	3/4 screen	2	In pic 25 %	70%	Out of focus	C= Center
3	Full length	3	in pic 50 %	60%	Mostly blurred	R=Right
4	Knees	4	In pic 75 %	50%	Bit Blurry	1-9 10% angle
5	Thighs	5	In pic 100%	40%	Goes in and out	B=balcony
6	Waist	6	In pic moves	30%	Soft Focus	S=Stalls
7	Mid Chest	7	steady hand	20%	Mostly In Focus	PRO=TV
8	Head/Shoulders	8	monopod steady	10%	Near Perfect	D = Dark
9	Head	9	perfect	Never	Perfect	



Magnetic Movements Video's

Magnetic Movements-On-Line by Chris Cooper

Issue 220

Hello and welcome

As to be expected there are a number of new films this month.

Too many to list I am afraid, though again you can view the forthcoming ones in brief at <http://dvdylan.com> Vygi keeps a full list of available DVDs there and the site is becoming quite versatile so check it out.

We pit these things on the back burner last time to make way for some films from the UK dates. So it seems now we have to catch up, so here goes, some very worthwhile things here, and quite a few more films from the European Tour to follow next time. By the way it should be understood that unless I say otherwise all the films listed here are currently available as DVDs. So getting them in the same quality as I review should be eminently possible. Have fun.

If you have any news / copies of films that have not been listed please don't be shy, tell me, or Vygi about them!



D	7	At times mid chest but blocky then
A	8	Hi Fi good stereo?overdubbed
S	7	Good but shakey at times
H	8	Rarely
F	7	Clear sometimes over zoomed
I		Balcony left Looking down 60%

12-08-03 HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM NYC 110.00

Silvio/I Don't Believe You/ Tweedle Dum / It Ain't Me Babe/ Things Have Changed/ Watching the River Flow /Love Sick/ Highway 61 Revisited/ Make You Feel My Love (s)/Drifters Escape/ Moonlight/ Honest With Me / Its

All Over Now Baby Blue/ Summer Days/// Like A Rolling Stone / All Along The Watchtower

This was a great show, Dylan is ducking and diving and really getting into it. A joy to see actually. However there are a few teething problems with the video, which if ironed out would make it much better. First there are no chapter divisions, it plays as one track, poor by today's standards. Secondly the sound has been redubbed but in a few places not totally accurately (though not far off) Don't let me stop you watching it as it's well worth seeing. The taper over zooms a bit at times, a common fault in this digital age, which results in a slightly grainy pic. But there's good panning and it's such a nice show that the faults do not much detract.



D	7	At times mid chest
A	7	Hi Fi good stereo
S	8	Very steady
H	8	Rarely
F	8	Clear pretty sharp
I		Balcony left Looking down 60%

13-08-03 HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM NYC 110.00

Tombstone Blues/ If You See Her Say Hello/ Tweedle Dum / You Ain't Goin Nowhere// Things Have Changed/ Most Likely You'll Go Your Way / Its Alright Ma/ Highway 61 Revisited/ Desolation Row/The Wicked Messenger/ Every Grain Of Sand/ Honest With Me /Don't Think Twice/ Summer Days/// Like A Rolling Stone / All Along The Watchtower

Night two and another great show, Dylan is once more ducking and diving though you have to say with less enthusiasm. Not so the taper, this is a better effort than the 12th a few teething problems are less evident. First there are now chapter divisions, but not in the right places. Dedicating the video up into 3 parts (probably as it was shot) may mean that some DVD players will not advance from part 1 to part 2 automatically The sound has probably been redubbed but better this time But the image is sharper and the zooming less grainy, and Bob does some great harmonica work, and Every Grain is just spot on!!! This is certainly one to locate



D	8	At times mid chest
A	7	Hi Fi good stereo
S	8	Very steady
H	8	Rarely
F	8	Clear but grainy
I		Balcony left Looking down 60%

20-08-03 HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM NYC 110.00

Maggies Farm/ Senor/ Tweedle Dum / Watching The River Flow/ Things Have Changed/ Highway 61 Revisited/ This Wheels On Fire/ You Ain't Goin Nowhere/ Just Like Tom Thumbs Blues/ Cold Irons Bound/Hattie Carroll/ Honest With Me /Mr Tambourine Man/ Summer Days/// Like A Rolling Stone / All Along The Watchtower/ Rainy Day Women

Night three was a bit delayed due to a rather large power cut, but our man is again on form, taper and artiste that is. and another great show, Dylan is once more very lively. Sadly the teething problems are back no chapter divisions and a slightly too grainy pic from zealous zooming in poor light. The sound has probably been redubbed but seems ok



D	2	Never fills the screen this pic is zoomed in
A	7	Hi Fi good stereo but bit echoey
S	7	Pretty steady
H	7	Only occasionally
F	8	Clear and mostly sharp
I		Balcony left Looking down 60% way back

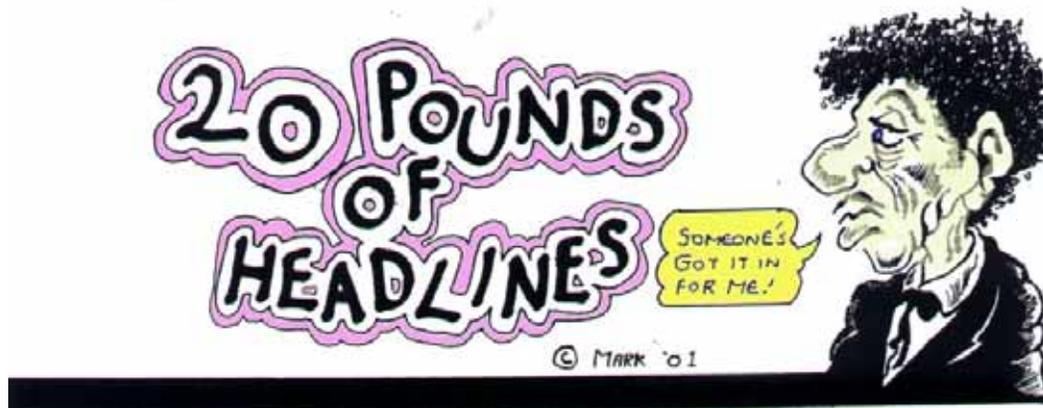
02-11-03 MILAN, ITALY

100.00

To Be Alone With You/ Its All over Now, Baby Blue/ Cry Awhile/ Desolation Row/ Its Alright Ma/Boots Of Spanish Leather/ Things Have Changed/ Dignity/ Hattie Carroll/ Tweedle Dum & Tweedle Dee/ Honest With Me /Every Grain Of Sand/ Summer Days/// Cats In The Well/ Like A Rolling Stone / All Along The Watchtower

The same venue as the weird "who threw the cigarette show?" from last year. This is a much more orderly event. Dylan gives a professional if familiar performance, he seems to be giving Freddie Koella a lot of scope here too. One question this show raises is that you can clearly see Dylan fiddling with lyric sheets throughout the show. So if he was using them this far back in the tour, why did the setlists not change sooner? Was it deliberately planned. Or is he just an awkward bugger (surely not!?)

Till Next Time...



By Mark Carter

We'll begin this month with another trawl through some of the reviews of (deep breath) "The Bootleg Series Volume 5. Bob Dylan Live 1975: The Rolling Thunder Revue" (hereafter known as "Live 1975") and we may as well kick off with the UK Press.

Record Collector's Peter Doggett begins his review by repeating what many a Dylan fan has said (no, not "how much do you charge for full sex, Miss?") mainly that this set is not representative of a full RTR show or even a full RTR Dylan set and/ or that Columbia didn't use the right show(s) , but does at least realize that "that's the blinkered dream of a fanatic". What it is, he concludes, is a close second to the 1966 tour and Dylan "never sung like this again, before or after; song after song is delivered in a majestic fury of emotion, totally without restrictions yet under complete control." *The Telegraph's* Caspar Llewellyn Smith simply found it to be "pure rock and roll and plainly magical...from an artist at one of his many creative peaks" whilst *The Guardian's* Adam Sweeting awarded it a maximum five stars and appreciated that this "rejuvenated " Dylan was far more impressive than the 1974 comeback version. "Where have they been keeping this stuff?" he asks. Exactly. *Uncut's* Andy Gill dished out four stars and earns my critic of the year accolade for calling Joan Baez "obtrusive and annoying". Mind you, does he mean just on this CD or in general?

Mojo's Chris Nelson is just as enthusiastic; "...Live 1975 is both of history and outside it. For sure, Dylanologists will seize it for study, but it demands repeated playing from anyone keen and exhilarated to hear life pour from their speakers." A shame, then, that they decided to illustrate such a glowing review with a 1974 photo.

Onto a few American reviews, beginning with the *Music Box's* John Metzger; "...a stunning representation of Dylan's 1975 touring canonOddly enough, it's not all that different from his tours of today, which while not including the friends and family sideshow atmosphere are loose, spirited and oh, so rewarding."

Jim Abbott of the *Orlando Sentinel* decides that "even if Dylan's musical experiments don't always hit the mark, they skillfully reflect his notion of the Rolling Thunder Revue as an

updated vaudeville show...Dylan always commands attention through the sheer force of his presence.”

The Louisville Courier-Journal's Jeffrey Lee Puckett awarded it four star (“the most interesting thing about the Rolling Thunder Revue is that Dylan’s vitality has been mirrored in his recent performances”) but is not impressed with the duets with Baez; “...Their voices sound awful together and always have.”

The Star-Telegram's Dave Ferman calls the RTR “a brilliant back-to-the-roots move” and reckons that this release is as essential in it’s way as the earlier Live 1966 set. Laurence Station of *Shakingthrough.net* thought he could detect the roots of the Neverending Tour way back in 1975; “...After so much domestic tension, Dylan sought refuge on the road, moving from venue to venue night after night, guaranteeing he’s never overstay his welcome or have to deal with any messy morning-after encounters.”

Svein Andersen, writing for Denmark’s *Aftenposten*, went so far as to suggest that “this may be the best concert recording Dylan has ever released. The sound is brilliant, while the music lives and breathes.”

Staying with Denmark, *Avis L's* Erik Valebrokk reckons that it’s one of the most important retro releases of 2002; “...This is modern musical history at it’s most relevant.. There is no way past this; Live 1975 is a fantastic record!” whilst *Verdens Gang's* Tor Milde calls it “a musical experience that will be hard to surpass...this CD is a joy to the ear, as the accompanying booklet is a joy to the eye.”

A knowledgeable Alberto Bravo previewed the release for Spain’s *La Razon*, even admitting that he is aware of the shows that the set is culled from. Strangely, Louis Skorecki concentrated his review in France’s *Liberation* on the bonus DVD and then revealed that Bootleg VCDs of Renaldo And Clara are easily available on the streets of Paris, going so far as to say that, if the word “poetry” didn’t sound so contrived then it would apply perfectly to that movie.

And finally, Maik Bruggemeyer of the German edition of *Rolling Stone* was also disappointed with (a) the non-inclusion of any of the other RTR performers and (b) the Baez duets, though he does conclude that “the album is an impressive document, showing how Dylan found his productive power of the 60’s onstage again.”

Away from shiny discs and onto the printed page, there was a criminally brief review of Sloman’s On The Road With Bob Dylan by Richard Jobes in the normally reliable *Mojo*; “...Never less than entertaining, it offers a rare glimpse into the world of Rocks most elusive figure.”

Neil Corcoran’s Do You, Mr Jones was afforded somewhat lengthier appraisals, not least in *Scotland On Sunday* where John McTernan advised “If you love Dylan, buy this book immediately, If you love America , popular music or literature, do the same.” The same book was reviewed by Robert Potts in no less than *The Times Literary Supplement*, though in not

quite so enthusiastic terms: "...It isn't that these theorists are used to illuminate Dylan, more that Dylan is being given a pat on the back for seeming to enact theorists more famous propositions." [The Independent](#) didn't review it at all, but reprinted an extract of Simon Armitage's essay instead. Still, it being one of the more readable and less pretentious chapters of the entire book, this was perhaps not a bad thing.

And, to finish this month, here's a roundup of some other odds and sods that were hitting the inky page (and computer screen) during December 2002. Griel Marcus' item on [Salon.com](#) was called Real Life Top 10 and concentrated almost entirely on Dylan's two October 2002 Madison Square Garden Shows. These range from the new lengthier stage introduction to performances of Something, Summer Days, Yeah! Heavy And A Bottle Of Bread and All Along The Watchtower ("it was impossible to imagine that Dylan ever played the song with more vehemence, or that, this night, six days after the midterm congressional elections, the performance was not utterly political, as much a protest song as Masters Of War").

[Mojo](#) presented an in-depth foray into the murky worlds of drugs and popular music and Andy Gill penned a lengthy and nicely written and illustrated study of how Dylan transformed from the (Warning! Tired old cliché ahead) cherubic choir boy of 1962 to the mad-haired "psychedelic visionary" of 1966. We know the story inside-out, of course, but for anyone who doesn't (is there anyone?!!) this is as good a place to start as any.

Finally, cartooning genius Mark Carter was interviewed by David Hannington for the [Eastern Daily Press](#)' Saturday Magazine on December 21st, the eve of the publication of his latest masterpiece A Christmas Carol. Carter is admirably modest of his breath-taking talent ("It's just a bit of Christmas Fun") and finally reveals who the two Sad Dylan Fans are really modeled after; ".. They're modeled after me. Until quite recently, I was that sad Dylan fan....I had nine editions of Tarantula. Nine of them – and one was in Spanish. Very sad, Mark, since I happen to know that you can't even read the English version of Tarantula

And would Mark like to meet his musical hero Bobby Dylan? "I'm not sure I'd like to meet him. He'd probably be scared of me. Not frightened. Just nervous.." No, Mark, he'd be frightened, very, very frightened.

And on that high note, it's time to sign off this month and head up to Hushabye Mountain. Until next month, farewell. Keep a clean nose and always carry an oversized lightbulb. Mind you, you'll look a twat.

THANKS THIS MONTH TO: GRAHAM A, JENS W, ANTONIO J.I., BRYAN G, GRAHAM W AND SIMON FINLAY OF THE EDP FOR THE NICE PHOTO OF ME AND JAMIE. AND THANKS ALSO TO KIM L



The Whole Wide World is watching

The best of the web by Martin Stein
(With thanks to Expecting Rain)

1. *Heading For Another Jaunt* - Dylan's March 2004 USA tour dates have been announced (www.bobdylan.com/live/)

2. *Caribbean Wind-Up* - 'Blowin' in the Wind: A Reggae Tribute to Bob Dylan' (CD 153.056, 2003) has been released. The tracks and artists are:

THE ABYSSINIANS - Blowin' in the Wind

MANKIND - The Times They Are A-Changin'¹

MIGHTY DIAMONDS - I Shall Be Released

FOURTH STREET SISTERS - Mr Tambourine Man

LEHBANCHULEH - Just Like A Woman

SUGAR BLACK - You're A Big Girl Now

MELLO - Silvio

CHALICE - Lay Lady Lay

REGGAE ROCKERS with BRADLEY BROWN - Don't Think Twice, It's All Right

BRADLEY BROWN - Forever Young

REGGAE ROCKERS with SUGAR BLACK and BIGGA STAAR - The Mighty Quinn

JUDY MO WATT - Knockin' on Heaven's Door

3. **Cover-Down** - An extensive database of song covers by and of Dylan can be found at www.coversproject.com/artist/Bob+Dylan
4. **Advertising Signs That Con** - A local edition ("Cornere del Veneto") of the major Italian newspaper ("II Corriere della Sera") says that Bob Dylan is in Venice to play a role in a spot. The article says that Dylan landed in Venice Saturday and spent all the day in the Gritti Hotel (on the Canal Grande). He got out just to play his role in the advertisement, shot in an ancient palace. He was the only male in a cast composed by top models. The article didn't say what kind of advertisement it was.
5. **Belle Isle** - A new book Bob Dylan In The British Isles (ISBN: 0-9546897-0-4) is to be published in January 2004. The book costs £15 + £5 p&p from Steve Butterworth, 95 Tenterfields, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1HJ.
6. **Precious Memories** - Bob Dylan has finally completed the first part of his long-awaited memoirs. Dylan initially delivered 30,000 words, but his publishers, Simon & Schuster, understandably thought this a trifle short. The singer has now doubled the word count. The first of three volumes will relate his time in the early 1960s, traipsing around New York clubs, listening and then composing.
7. **Play A Song For Me** - An excellent interactive online database of Bob Dylan performances covering an astonishing 2174 concerts, 37674 songs performed, can be found at <http://db.dylantrce.com/>
8. **Maybe Someday** - The UK release date of the Don't Look Back DVD is now 4th September 2004.
9. **Greasy Kid's Stuff** - Buoyed by a plentiful supply of Coca-Cola, Wotsits and Jammie Dodgers, Gabrielle (six), Ben (six), Holly (seven), Beth (seven), Benjamin (seven) and Sophie (six) - all friends from Rokesly infant school in Crouch End, north London - were willing guinea pigs in our experiment to discover if children could enjoy crusty old rock music. As well as gauging their opinions we tested their endurance by allowing them to stop the song when they became bored and posed the all-important question: is this better than Busted? **Bob Dylan: Like A Rolling Stone (1965)**
 What the grown-ups say: "Dylan drives his inspiration and imagination to even greater heights... Anger, hatred, disgust, defiance, disbelief, apathy, ignorance, repugnance; it's all here." (Earthsound) What the kids say: Beth This is not good.
 Holly He said bums. This sounds really, really old. Ben Brilliant, this is just brilliant. It's great. I actually really like it. Sophie He sounds like he's just smelled something really bad, like cat poo. Benjamin Twenty trillion out a septillion. It's like mouldy old bread. Attention span: 15 seconds. Better than Busted? "It's stupid, Busted aren't stupid."



Our Top Ten by The Two Riders

Well, it's that time of year again. Before we go any further may we wish all of you a Happy New Year – let's hope it's a good one. This year's top ten follows a similar pattern to that which we have done for years now and some of the stuff we talk about may well cross over from last year. Not quite sure about when new came across some of these things we describe but we are saying in 2003. Hell it's 2004 already – so does it matter????/

How it all got done in the good old days

Yes folks it's the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company show "Folk Songs and Other Folk Songs" from 1963. This is a pretty interesting show even if it is very dated and terribly smugly presented. Unlike most of the world (it would seem) we've never bought into this American-fuelled myth that it is the Land of the Free (if you believe them the **only** free land). This show is presented in that way, though it is acknowledged that it is not a country free of faults. Still, Carolyn Hester's performances are very good and Dylan's are light years beyond the others. The setting, being studio-based, is very formalised and Dylan does not look that animated but certainly more so than some of his contemporary TV performances. He performs three songs, **Blowin' In The Wind**, **Man of Constant Sorrow** and **Ballad of Hollis Brown**. The first and last of these certainly have an unseen banjo and bass accompaniment, probably from two of the Brothers Four (whose performances are truly cringe-worthy).

Dylan then joins the entire cast for a Brothers Four-led version of This Land Is Your Land for which he stands right at the back and is almost obscured as he strums away. Certainly worthy of a good Dylan collection.

He had a face like a mask

Masked & Anonymous is probably the most contentious item of the year! You will either love or hate this film. There are without doubt weaknesses with the performance but overall it is far more enjoyable experience than watching Hearts Of Fire! Musically there are some excellent performances included in the film and strangely (or maybe not knowing Dylan!) the best, **I'll Remember You**, is left off the sound track album! The other songs of note are, **Down In The Flood**, **Amazing Grace**, **Diamond Joe**, **Dixie**, **I'll Remember You**, **Drifter's Escape**, **Dirt Road Blues**, **Cold Irons Bound** all recorded for the film and **Blowin' In The Wind** recorded live at Santa Cruz, CA, 16 March 2000. As this is due out on DVD early next year possibly with additional material so it could return in the next Top Ten!!!

Moon, Moon, Turn The Tides Slowly, Slowly

Another PA segment emerges from Dylan's Fox Warfield show of 16th November 1980 only 23 years on. There is still more to come but we are getting there. Apart from the introductory gospel song section by the backing singers we also get four more Dylan songs, **When You Gonna Wake Up?**, **Blowin' In the Wind**, **City of Gold** and **Baby Blue**. Now there are only four songs missing so check in again in 2026!

New Songs, Old Songs

Ineffably beautiful, haunting, sorrowful and uplifting is the new Dylan song '**Cross The Green Mountain**, the song he wrote for the Civil War film Gods and Generals. The song hangs suspended on virtually a single chord as Dylan unfolds his very lengthy tale with some killer couplets. At the end of each verse, the music effortlessly shifts a scale for a second producing such a yearning sound that you could drift away into the universe on it's wake.

"Pride will vanish
and glory will rot
but virtue lives
and cannot be forgot".

Less essential is the re-working of **Gonna Change My Way Of Thinking** done with Mavis Staples. It starts off with the conventional first verse then cuts out as Dylan engages in a cod conversation with Staples about how he's got the blues reading Snooze week etc etc etc. Dylan and Staples then launch into a heavy version of the song with completely re-written lyrics.

It used to go like that and now it goes like this

Not sure how qualified we are to write about the newly re-mastered Dylan albums since we only have two of them at the moment. Both of these (Bringing and Blonde) are surround sound and it's a listening experience to which one needs to acclimatise. Hearing all of these different instruments coming from different directions sort of peels away that old familiar sound of the albums which has been burned into the brain for 40 years. But these do present much clearer sound and it is much easier to hear the different instruments. Does not do a lot for **Gates of Eden** or **It's Alright, Ma** but one wouldn't expect that unless it was a very artificial sound. Nice sleeves too. The big argument will be/is about whether bonus cuts/alternates should have been included. Our view is that they should have been but on a second disc as there is a worthy school of thought which believes that classic albums can be ruined by tampering with them. Yes, we know that there is a Program function, a skip switch and so on but you get the idea. Worth getting these two certainly.

Only three things continue. Life, death and the 1984 Soundboard collection

This gathering of 1984 soundboards features eighteen tracks, all in excellent quality. The details of these have been known since 1991 but the actual recordings have not been widely circulated before now. The only disappointment is to have so much repetition given that there are three versions each of **Blowin' In The Wind** and **Love Minus Zero/No Limit**, plus another two songs which are duplicated. However, it still makes excellent listening.

Somedays you eat the bear, somedays the bear eats you

Dylan's touring year in 2003 was pretty remarkable. But it ended with some of those magic moments that make the previous highs and lows merely land ripples on an infinite plateau. Dylan reeled off three consecutive shows in three different London venues, completely re-writing the set-list from the rest of the tour and from night to night. There was very little repetition, a lot of rarer songs and great energy. But the outstanding surprise must be the first performance in 27 years of **Romance In Durango**. Now where did that come from?

Oh No! another bloody soundboard - San José, CA, 12 Oct 2001

Yet another addition to the collection of soundboards but it qualifies as a must-have because of the fact that there are four tracks from "Love And Theft". These are **Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum**, **Summer Days**, **Sugar Baby** and **Honest With Me**. Alongside these **Wait For The Light To Shine** and **Searching For A Soldier's Grave** are welcome inclusions.

There ain't no neutral ground

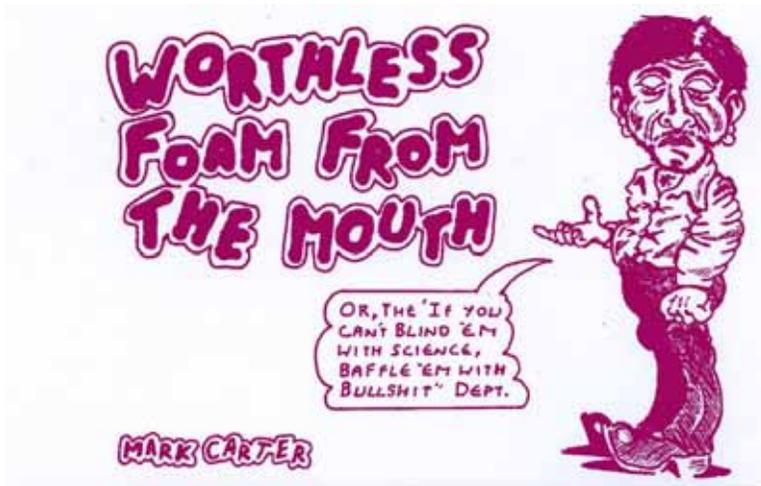
Occasionally something becomes available which leaves us wanting more and the video of this track is one of those. **I Will Love Him**, from the 19 April 1980 concert in Toronto, hasn't been available before, except as an audience tape. This is an amazing performance featuring some stunning close ups of Dylan from one of his most committed periods. Oh to have the whole show like this!

There were three kings (well two, anyway)

Dave Bromberg session, June 1992

We have had to wait quite a while for any 'new' studio material to emerge. Even though these are not new 'Dylan' songs the performances on the four tracks available from the 1992 Dave Bromberg session are excellent. The tracks circulating are **Miss The Mississippi And You**, **Kaatskill Serenade**, **Sloppy Drunk** and **Polly Vaughn** with the rendition of the last song a particular favourite. As with the Toronto video discussed above, the only disappointment is that this isn't the complete session as there are another eight songs which don't do the rounds! However, apart from that little complaint this is still a major highlight for the year.

Restless Farewell for now.



I'LL REMEMBER YOU

Is it just me or do these Top Tens seem to come around quicker and quicker the older you get? Anyway, here's this year's in what has been another pretty quiet year Dylan-wise for me.

FAMILY VALUES. In this ever changing world in which we live in it's good to have a solid rock to cling onto. I sometimes think that Jamie is the only thing that keeps me sane, even though he sometimes drives me mad. If you see what I mean.

BOB IN BIRMINGHAM. A slick show was given an edge of uncertainty through Bob's illness, so I watched with baited breath in case he collapsed or simply chucked in the towel. Luckily, neither happened and he delivered two remarkable highlights – It's Alright Ma and Hattie Carroll. That's two more than I was expecting and - ill or not - at least he didn't repeat the snoozeathon that was Birmingham in 2002. History will probably record it as one of the poorer shows of the UK tour - if not the whole European tour - but I was happy enough. Then again, perhaps I'm easily pleased.

MASKED AND ANONYMOUS. With a critical drubbing that made Renaldo And Clara and Hearts Of Fire seem warmly received by comparison, I was prepared for this to be a celluloid version of Tarantula only with worse songs. Imagine my. Surprise, then, when it turned out to be a pretty damn good movie with a plot (of sorts) that rolled along steadily, a cracking soundtrack, some excellent live footage from the Bobmeister and a few nice touches of the surreal which, for me, made it closer to a filmed version of Desolation Row (with a few apocalyptic bits from practically everything he,s written since 1989 thrown in for good measure) than the not-as-clever-as-it-thinks-it-is ramblings of Dylan's hopelessly dense book.

THE DARKNESS. A band that hailed originally from Lowestoft (a hitherto unknown breeding ground of rock gods), The Darkness remind me of why I got into music in the first place back in the mid-70s. Part Queen, part Rush, part 1973 Glam Rock, this is a band that knows how to enjoy themselves and send up the whole rock genre at the same time. They are no Spinal Tap, however; they clearly love what they do and are good at it and are poised to

become massive if only they can hold it together. Their Christmas single Christmas Time (Don't Let The Bells End) is the best seasonal record since - what? - The Pretender's 2000 Miles back in 1983 probably, and the video is hilarious. Listen to them, watch them and for a moment believe it's 1975 again.

EARLY DYLAN. Like Christopher Prick's Visions Of Sin, this was a book I had no intention of buying until I noticed our local Virgin Megastore had a huge pile and was selling them off. Unlike Visions Of Sin, this was a book I didn't regret buying, despite it's brevity of pages. For sheer entertainment value, this book can't be beaten - sometimes all you want to do is relax and look at a few lovely old pictures of Bob that you've never seen before, back in the days when he wasn't even shaving every day (not that he shaved every day anyway, at least not until that little slug crawled onto his upper lip).

DVDs. By drastically cutting down my Dylan expenditure this year I was able to invest in a DVD player and replace most of my favourite movies with shiny discs, usually packed with many extras. I'm probably as much a movie buff as I am a music buff so I'm particularly pleased with the way my collection has grown this year. With such classics as Citizen Kane, Once Upon A Time In America and Halloween receiving 2003 releases, it has proven to be a good time to convert. Plus, both series of Phoenix Nights, The Office, three Alan Partridge sets, every Father Ted episode ever in one box set and the first two series of Teachers also coming out, my funny bone has been well and truly tickled. Not only that, but disposing of those bulky video cases means that I've actually made some shelf space this year!

FANZINES. Nowadays I only receive Isis and The Bridge (plus our own mag every month, of course) and they are enough for me. They satisfy my needs and provide some fine writing on Dylan from people who understand him.

THE WHITE BEAR 1978 CD SET. This, along with the superb Eat The Document DVD, has been my only major Dylan purchase of any importance. Collecting together three 1978 shows from the beginning, middle and end of the year, plus a roundup of every song that Dylan played throughout the massive world tour, this restates what a classic year it was and reminds me of why I discovered - and was smitten - by Dylan in 1978. Anyone who continues to dismiss this tour and Street Legal as minor chapters in Dylan's history are simply wrong.

OTHER MUSIC. This year I bought far too much music by other artists to list here (for the first time in a couple of decades or more I have acquired more legal CDs by other artists than illegal ones by Dylan), but special mention should be made here for Ron Sexsmith's Cobblestone Runway, Richard Thompson's The Old Kit Bag and Emmylou Harris' Stumble Into Grace, which I would wholeheartedly recommend to anybody. Also, Mojo issued a killer Mott The Hoople compilation for a measly seven quid, which confirms what a top band they were. I have rediscovered a love for music both new and old which my past obsessive compulsion to collect everything by Dylan stifled for far too long.

SAD DYLAN FANS HALLOWEEN SPECIAL. My vision to kill them off in the epic style that they deserved was realised in spades. It actually came off even better than I had expected or hoped and is probably one of the best things I've done. I have been pleasantly surprised by the strength of feeling expressed at their demise, not least from our own JRS, with many people saying their adventures were the best thing I've ever done. Shame, really, since I guess that what ever I produce in the future will be considered substandard. Ironically, within the pages of Freewheelin' - where I have always considered their true home to be - their swansong was not commented upon, other than by the aforementioned JRS. This may be part of the continuing "we don't talk any more" malady affecting the magazine that I and Chris Cooper have commented upon in the past or perhaps they truly have had their day within these pages and nobody really gives a shit one way or the other.

Whatever, spending three months weaving them into one of the last truly scary horror movies ever made and paying tribute to John Carpenter's masterpiece and the two loveable morons at the same time was one of the most enjoyable things of 2003.

DOWNERS OF THE YEAR

VISIONS OF SIN. The long-awaited word from on high from the usually reliable Christopher Ricks turned out to be the year's biggest disappointment, even with getting it eight pounds shy of the asking price. I gamely struggled on for a few chapters and then gave up. I think I've used the phrase "pretentious old wank" already, but that's what it is and so I'll say it again. It's a pile of pretentious old wank.

NOT FEELING THE URGE TO BUY THE SACD REISSUES. Deep down, I know I should get them and a scant few years ago I'd 've probably snapped up the box set without a moment's thought. Nowadays, though, although I know I should at least invest in the ones that the reviews suggest are a marked improvement, I keep looking at the £11.99 price stickers and worrying about what else I could be spending the money on.

MISSING THE LAST THREE LONDON SHOWS. Of course I would have loved to have been there and, had they been announced at the same time as the aircraft hanger dates, would have passed over Birmingham in favour of any of them. However, for primarily financial reasons (though preserving my sanity does come into it, as does a continuing dwindling of interest), these days I tend to restrict myself to one show per tour, so, for me, the best Dylan shows I've ever seen still took place in February 1990. It's kind of reassuring to know, however, that I came closer to altering that fact than at any time since February 1990. Maybe next time.

And that's it for another twelve months. I hope everyone reading this has a fantastic 2004/ with plenty of whatever it is that you want most.

Hipsters, Flipsters, & Finger Poppin' Daddies!

This Year's Festive Top Ten.... By C.P.Lee

Another year of blood. Another year of pain. Another year of futile, unimaginable horror – Still, enough about me – What's my top ten for this last year? What could be listed? I've looked around and can't seem to find much that I actually acquired.

That's nonsense of course, I got lots – It's just that I'm not sure which best tickles my fancy, turned me on, or rung my bell any more than any other particular item. Then there are abstract thoughts, emotions and experiences. Crikey!



1

Let's start with [Handsome Harry The Hipster Gibson](#) – a cat so wiggled out that even Dizzy Gillespie said he had trouble understanding him. Only ever having known him through a handful of obscure recordings – *Who Put The Benzedrine In Mrs Murphy's Ovaltine?* And, *Stop That Dancing Up There!* being two notable favourites, it was a gas to be given a DVD documentary about the man. Directed by Harry's granddaughter it features archive footage plus interviews with Harry who committed suicide in 1990 aged 75. Until I watched the documentary I'd assumed that he'd passed away in the Sixties and it was an education to fill in the gaps and learn more about the life of one of the wackiest characters in modern music.

2

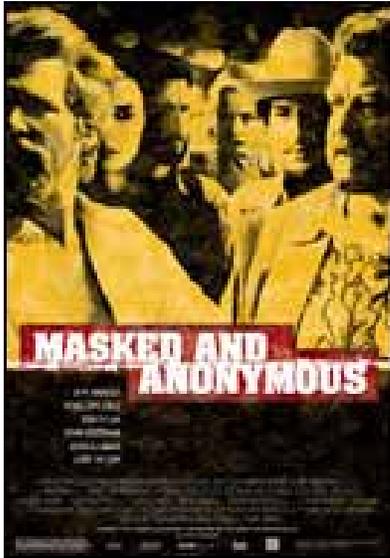


The biggest and the bestest thing to happen this year was the wedding of our son Tom to his betrothed, Alys. And as if that wasn't enough – it took place in [Prague](#) - which just happens to be our favourite city in the universe. It was August, there was beer, there was a Bluegrass band (and I sang with them!) ... T and A got married in the 16th century town hall opposite the house

where John Dee lived when he was alchemist to King Stephen of Bohemia. It was magickal in every sense of the word.

Time now for my first Bob Dylan entry, and it's a double header – It's!

3



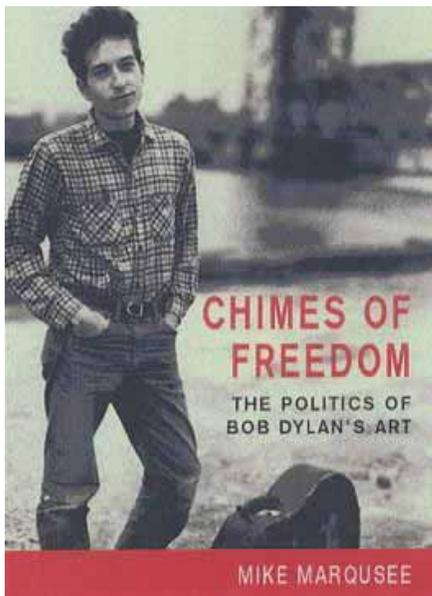
My introduction to the film came through the [soundtrack](#) album. It was at once both intriguing and somewhat perplexing. What the hell was *Dixie* doing on there? *My Back Pages* in Japanese as the opener? Then it all fell into place. It was a masterstroke on Dylan's (or Larry Charles') part to use cover versions to delineate Jack Fate's career. It was refreshing for me too to listen to these radically different versions of classic songs. When I discovered that Sertab (*One More Cup of Coffee*) was this year's Eurovision Song Contest winner, I was even more baffled by it all, but delighted as well. When me and Pam been in Turkey we'd fallen in love with the music scene there, particularly a guy called Tarkan who is Sertab's mentor. I've got a few Dylan cover albums by a whole assortment of people, but this one is by far the best – Probably because it's got Dylan on there as well! So the soundtrack can be judged a success. What was to come next was a revelation.

4



Masked & Anonymous is, in my opinion, a good film. It's certainly not the turkey that the American media want us to believe, and the reason that they have a down on the movie has more to do with the current political climate than anything to do with Dylan's artistic integrity or lack of artistic clarity. It's a film that sets out to present a view of present day America and that view is not a pretty one. It might or might not be an erroneous view, I don't care either way. What I do care about is that Dylan actually does have a point of view and has chosen to express it through the medium of film. For years people have agonised over the meaning of his words, now they're being offered meaning in spades and it's all too much for them to take. Brilliant Bob!

5



And sticking with Dylan and analyses of his work in particular – what a year for books about the maestro – Ricks, et al, burst out of their studies with a plethora of books aimed at die-hard

Dylanites and neophytes alike. My own particular favourite is Mike Marqusee's **Chimes of Freedom**, an intriguing look at the evolution of Dylan's oeuvre in the 1960s, from 'Folkie' to 'Protest' to 'Poet'. Marqusee approaches the subject from a Left-wing perspective and provides a fascinating look at American domestic politics and the turmoil of the sixties and Dylan's association with all these influences through a lens of radicalism tinted with humanistic idealism. A good read.



Pirates of the Caribbean – Who amongst us could resist having their buckle swashed? As a kid I was a sucker for action movies, especially historical action movies, and in particular – Pirate movies – *Captain Blood*, *Blackbeard*, *Last of the Buccaneers*, oh for a life on the Spanish Main and a bottle of rum! Sixteen men on a dead man's chest! What was that all about? Anyway, whoever had the brilliant idea of putting Johnny Depp into the role of Jack Sparrow, pirate extraordinaire, deserves an Oscar. Played to the hilt as a stoned, immaculate rogue, Depp looks and acts just like a present day Rock star. In fact, in interviews he explained how he'd based his character on Keith Richards. No surprise then that Richards has accepted a cameo role in *Pirates 2*, as Depp/Sparrow's on-screen father. Role on the sequel me hearties!!

7



I'd never been to Greece before this year and a visit to a record shop whilst staying in Kos revived my interest in a form of music that's sometimes colloquially known as 'The Greek Blues', or **Rembetika**. In 1919 Greece and Turkey fought a bitter war that resulted in the mass expulsion of one and a half million Greek speaking Turkish Christians from their homes. They fled to Athens and its environs. Virtually overnight the population doubled.

They brought with them a form of music that was particularly suited to the underworld of Piraeus, a music that was fuelled by hashish and sanctified by suffering. Adopted by the Greek born 'Mangas' or gangster underworld, Rembetika became a huge sensation through the medium of 78rpm discs. Rembetika singers such as Markos Vamvakaris and Stellakis Perpiniadis went from total poverty to undreamed of wealth with songs such as, *The Junky's Complaint*, which has lyrics that go –

*From the time I started to smoke the dose
The world has turned its back on me and I don't know what to do
From sniffing it up I went onto the needle
And my body slowly began to melt
Nothing is left for me to do in this world
Because the drugs have left me to die in the street.*

The music, hardly surprisingly, has a curious dreamlike quality even at a fast tempo, it's half Arabic, half western, and usually performed on the bouzouki, a stringed instrument a bit like an elongated mandolin. By the 1930s the Greek authorities became alarmed at the popularity of Rembetika and it was outlawed. Musicians devised 'sawn-off' versions of bouzoukis that could be carried under coats and produced at safe houses when music was demanded. As a genre it literally went underground, being confined to cellars and caves.

8



Where Dead Voices Gather

I was slightly late coming to Nick Tosches' masterly account of the career and times of Minstrel Show singer, Emmett Miller. Miller was a blackface yodeler whose style directly influenced Jimmie Rodgers (who also started out in blackface) and Hank Williams. He was the first artist to record *Lovesick Blues* in 1925. Reading this book and then re-listening to 'Love & Theft' added even more texture to the sonic tapestry that is Dylan's musical patchwork quilt of

an album. The links between Eric Lott's original study of blackface minstrelsy, *Love & Theft*, Tosches' examination of Miller and minstrelsy in this volume, and Dylan's inclusion of the Oscar Vogel character in *Masked & Anonymous* are intriguing to say the least. Occasionally Tosches' writing style, it's full of "it behooves me dear reader" verbosity, irritated me, but the sheer amount of information he packs in about the racial cross-fertilisation of American popular music in the 19th and early 20th centuries makes it all worth while.

9



The most consistently popular show on American TV from 1950 to 1960 was Groucho Marx's **You Bet Your Life**, a quiz show where his ability to ad-lib while interviewing the contestants clearly demonstrated what a comic genius he was. Here's an example – Groucho to female contestant – “And how many children do you have?”

The woman answered, “Eleven Groucho.”

“Eleven children! How come you got so many?”

“I guess I love my husband a lot!”

To which, Groucho replied – “Well I like cigars a lot, but I take them out of my mouth every once in a while!”

And on another show, a priest said he'd like to thank Groucho for all the pleasure he'd brought into people's lives. Groucho looked at him for a moment and then said – “And I'm not going to thank you for all the pleasure you've taken out of people's lives.”

The programme was never shown in Britain, but over the years it became my kind of Holy Grail, due to the fact that I'd developed an obsession with the Marx Brothers and all their works. You could just about see their movies and you could read the books, but *You Bet Your Life* remained that obscure object of desire. I got so genned up on it that I could hold knowledgeable conversations with Americans about the duck and the secret word and who were the most famous contestants, all without ever having seen a single episode, and then one day I flew into New York ...

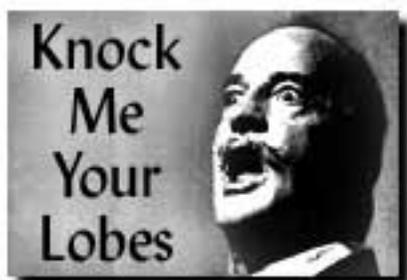
The first thing I did when I checked into my hotel was switch on the TV and my mind was well and truly blown because right there on screen in front of me was a re-run of *You Bet Your Life*! To say that I was in pig heaven would be a serious understatement.

Decades later I get an email from PSB in Philly. Had I seen this DVD? It's called *You Bet Your Life – The Missing Episodes*? He figured correctly that the reason I would be very interested indeed was because one of the contestants featured on disc one, chapter five, and originally broadcast in August 1956 was a certain Lord Buckley.

I got my set for Christmas and it's a gas – Groucho is caustic, witty, sharp and brilliant. The other guests include a bizarre politician from Louisiana, Dudley Leblanc, Gary Cooper's mother-in-law, a bevy of 50s pin-up girls, comedian Ernie Kovacs and a tree surgeon! It's both fascinating and very relaxing watching TV shows from nearly fifty years ago, and then of course – there's ...

10

Lord Buckley Himself.



He enters from stage right accompanying an archetypical Californian housewife who's been plucked from the audience to share the slot. Buckley truly deserves the soubriquet 'Lord' –

His bearing is impeccably imposing, his suit and tie as sharp as the ends of his upturned moustache. He's introduced as 'RM Buckley' and it's not long before Groucho twigs that he probably has another monicker – The Lord fills him in and then proceeds to rap in Hip talk, to which a baffled Groucho responds by saying to the audience – "I know I heard a few of you laughing out there. If any of you know what he's talking about would you mind telling me!"

Throughout his five or six minutes on screen, Buckley answers Groucho's questions politely, gives a demonstration of Hip Semantics with his "Hipsters, Flipsters" speech and wins \$500. Exit stage right.

Considering there's so little of Buckley around on video, plus the fact that he's with Groucho Marx, this DVD set is the biggest gas of the far goneasphere = **I LOVE it!!**

2003 Top Ten By Paula Radice

* see below

2003 was a funny year. The lows were very low, and the highs were very high. Fortunately, the highs came towards the end of the year, and have done much to restore my equilibrium and faith in the universe before the start of a new year.

For the first time in my teaching career, I didn't get a new class, but moved up with last year's lot, because of the extent of the special needs in the class: they wear me out, but I love them to bits, and am very much enjoying the progress they're making in Year 4. Christmas last year saw Monica's husband's terminal diagnosis, so the first half of 2003 was very much occupied with that very sad situation. Derek's death in June, and its emotional aftermath which of course still continues, was a very low point. Then Dr. Bob (God bless him) came along to cheer us up!

1. Dylan friendships...as always, the best reason to be a Dylan fan.

2. Shepherd's Bush ...for being totally weird and totally wonderful.

3. The trip to Munich...for being the first positive thing since Derek's death, and for the cakes, and the Christmas shopping, and for letting me show off my German which I haven't used for twenty years, and oh yes, for a great Dylan show.

4. Wembley, Hammersmith and Brixton...for all being exciting in their own way, and giving me a real boost in the middle of a very long and tiring term.

5. Masked and Anonymous...for being a quantum leap better than I could ever have dared hope, and for being full of quotable lines and memorable scenes. Cant wait to see it on a big screen.

6. Cross the Green Mountain...for two sets of lines which have meant a lot to me this year: "*Serve God and be cheerful; look upward, beyond...*" and "*Pride will vanish, And*

glory will rot, But virtue lives. And cannot be forgot". A very timely reminder indeed of how utterly pointless war is.

7. Journeying Oop North in August.. for the chance to visit the sexiest Dylan fans in the Universe (in Newcastle, of course, how could you even need to ask?), and to revisit happy times in Durham, and to lay some of Derek's ashes surreptitiously on Hadrian's Wall.

8. Christopher Ricks' book.. for the dreadful yet brilliant puns.

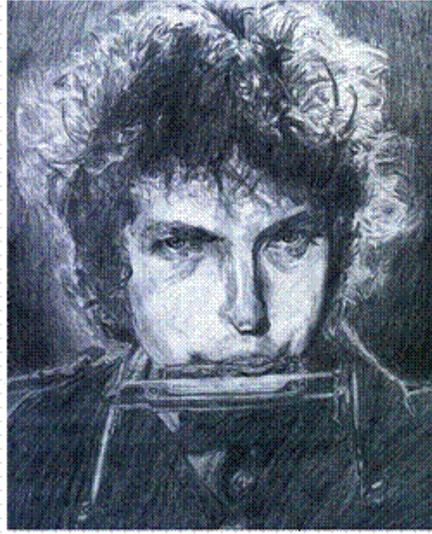
9. The SACD remasters...which I havent properly listened to yet, as the boxed set was a Christmas present, but primarily for reminding lots of people how great Dylan was and still is.

10. Bob's onstage jiggling-about...for being easily the most amusing spectacle of the year. Do you know anyone else in the world who moves the way he does? And if they do, is it because of any particular medical condition?

Dylan low-points of the year? Only one - the dreadful pre-Wembley "do", at the dirty, dingy workingmen's club on Empire Way, which made me shudder. To call it down-market would be a ludicrous understatement (I know what "down-market" means; I live in Hastings, where the term may well have been invented). I'm not normally one who likes moving swiftly, but I couldn't wait to get out of there. In those grim surroundings, we looked like the saddest bunch of ***** possible. Never again, please; we deserve better.

Thanks, fellow Freewheelers, for all your friendship and support this year: it is always a great pleasure to meet up with, or hear from, any of you. May you and your families enjoy every happiness in 2004.

- **this is a space** to draw in your own picture of Bob this month: I'm at my parents' for Christmas, and my father's computer is refusing to have any dealings with photos of Our Man. Draw in a picture of your favourite on-stage silly manoeuvre.



Bob Dylan portrait by A.Fortier

[ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE](#) *By Michael Crimmins*

MY TOP TEN HAPPENINGS FOR 2003.

Well to go and see the man in concert has got to be top of the agenda for any self respecting Bob Dylan fan. This being done and especially after finding him as sharp as a barbed wire fence , and as hot as blistering sun,

[Hallam FM Arena, Sheffield, November 20, 2003](#) has got to go into the top position of my top ten, for what to my mind ,with regards to Dylan, has been a very uplifting and fulfilling year. "Maggies Farm" came in as fresh as at Newport 65, although the timing was considerably better than on that night some thirty eight years earlier! Dylan was 'on' at Sheffield no doubt about it, vocally expressive would not sum up the delivery on "Desolation Row" and "Cry A While", and Bob seems to have been delivering the goods all year round to very contented fans.

More recent years have brought forth disgruntled utterances from

even the usually most faithful sources. Dylan is enjoying his piano playing ,more so in recent months, as he has become more comfortable with it as his full time stage ally.

Bob may not have made a conscious decision to play chords again but that is what he is doing, and I found it to be a most significant contributing factor of this very animated show. Basically he has reverted to what until the late eighties he had always done, backing his vocal with solid chording. He has thus freed himself from the almost constant guitar twiddling trap that he has been in for many a year now, not that it was all bad; in fact at times some of it was bloody good! However whether it be with guitar or piano the author of the songs has more intimate control over the proceedings in this way, leaving Larry or the excellent Freddie Koella to express the spirit of the music with the lead instrument. The Dylan body language or lack of it, has always been a strong indicator of his mood, and inextricably linked to the worth of a performance. How many reviewers have noted the shuffling feet? And what a joy to see one Dylan heel almost permanently off the floor once more. An all round warmth has returned to the performance, and most importantly you are watching and listening to Bob Dylan and his band not the Bob Dylan band.

This year saw the release of arguably the greatest cover album of all time , [Gotta Serve Somebody The Gospel Songs Of Bob Dylan Various Artists](#)

Although I find this fantastic collection to be a truly great album, it is listed here in my number two position for 2003 for another reason beside the actual record. It is here because , it gladdens my heart that the very people that Dylan respects and has worked among, have come together in such a rewarding project, to inadvertently validate Bob Dylan's sincerity in writing, recording, and performing, these grossly underrated gospel songs in the first place .

Bob's decision to join the proceedings and record a rewrite of "Gonna Change My Way of Thinking" with Mavis Staples only serves to remind us of the spiritual awareness, main artery almost that has always existed within his work.

All of the eleven selections included in Jeffrey Gaskill's brainchild 'Gotta Serve Somebody' are taken from 'Slow Train Coming' and 'Saved'. It particularly pleased me that the greater number came from the 'Saved' album. 'Saved' has always been my favourite Dylan album apart from those untouchables of the sixties. Dylan sang most of the songs featured on the most regular basis between November 1979 to May 1980, and while gaining himself the respect of new fans with this overtly Christian orientated music, he managed if only temporarily to disenchant and consequently lose a whole lot more.

Paul Williams one of my favourite Dylan writers, and one of the few who realize the inspirational greatness of Dylan's, in the composing and performing of these songs, was less enthusiastic about the recordings of them, at least in the case of the 'Saved' album. Williams was witness to a lot of the Warfield shows, and claims that the material had lost a lot of its spark by the time it was put down on to tape, he also points to the fact that this was the first time Dylan had recorded with his touring band. That Williams' opinion on the outcome of 'Saved' is shared by some of the actual people who recorded it, would seem to indicate then that this album does fall short of the great album that it could have been. Is it not possible however, that if the edge for recording these songs had been lost a little with over familiarity could not that same over familiarity also be influential towards the listeners more negative reaction? Surely this must be the case, because Williams is not so down on 'Saved' as he thinks, in admitting that the title track is performed better on the album than at most of the concerts, also in that he finds the recorded "Satisfied Mind" "absolutely magnificent" and that he also quite likes the recorded "Are You Ready".

I believe 'Saved' to be Bob Dylan's most honest album, the depth of

emotion displayed on "Covenant Woman" for example is unbelievable. A live equivalent of this performance is the Toronto 20/4/1980 "What Can I do For You" with THAT amazing harmonica solo .

A nice story to associate with the "Gotta Serve Somebody" album and a tribute in itself to the worth of The Gospel Songs of Bob Dylan, is the one told by it's executive producer Jeffrey Gaskill who attended his first Bob Dylan concert at the age of seventeen , the venue The Memorial theatre , Worcester, Massachusetts , the year was 1980.

"The whole evening made a deep impression on me, it was the dramatic situation and conviction and bravery of what he was doing. A seed was planted that evening which began to take hold"

Despite a family environment of church goers, Gaskill claims to have been a non believer. Dylan's "conviction and bravery" turned things around for him.

It is of immense relief to me, when I go down to the local boozier to hear the noise of The Who coming at me as is the usual in this particular watering hole of mine. I do not hear the once seemingly ever popular leader of the gang shouts, or stories of how everyone has gone to the moon!

So I presume that the public has made it's mind up that Pete Townshend is innocent , innocent that is of being a paedophile.

[TOWNSHEND CLEARED OF BEING IN POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY](#)

Yes, Who fans around the globe will have heaved a sigh of relief at that announcement. Quite rightly Townshend received a caution from the Police , with his name unfortunately entering onto a sex offenders list where it will remain for a minimum of five years .

The Police unconditionally accepted Pete's story . The tabloids

who made much of Townshend's arrest had very little to say about the outcome of the four month investigation, what a surprise! I believe Pete Townshend to be totally innocent of the charges, and at the same time accept that I really did want to believe that from the outset.

The Observer on 28 December featured an interview with Townshend by Sean O'Hagan, if you have not read it, it is well worth a look. A link was posted on Expecting rain on the 31 December entitled "Wont get fooled again"

What do Alias, Renaldo, Billy Parker, and Jack Fate besides all being portrayed on film by Bob Dylan, have in common?

The answer: They all look decidedly uncomfortable.

Just being himself and doing what he does in "Dont Look Back" and the actual concert footage from "Renaldo & Clara" Dylan commands the screen, he brings to it all the uncommon might of his charisma.

Obviously there is a vast difference between playing a dramatic role and being the subject of a documentary.

Dylan's apparent ease in front of the camera in "Dont Look Back" and "Eat The Document" contrast sharply to his jumpy looking dramatic roles.

[Masked & Anonymous](#)

Dylan is not a great actor and I hardly think that this statement is going to shatter anybody's illusions to the contrary. The fact that Dylan does not portray Jack Fate with ease, leads me to believe that Dylan is not Fate, no more than he was Alias. Ha!! so everything is OK then, it was Fate that sang "Dixie" Phew !!! that was a close one !!

"You cant open your mind up to every conceivable point of view" and of course that Dylan line is true, and sometime two heads are

better than one. This is my way of saying that while I find Jack Fate in some way's closely aligned with Dylan; I do not think that he is Dylan. Some reviewers would have us believe that "Masked and Anonymous" is in some way auto biographical. I found the film very enjoyable ,I am not so sure how I would view it if I were not a Dylan fan . Still "You cant open your mind up to every conceivable point of view" The film could be described as a more audacious version of "When The Ship Comes In" it is set possibly anywhere in southern America , and all we know for sure is that a benefit concert is being staged for all the wrong reasons . It highlights power and greed and the unimportance of ordinary people . The film is full of statements, like.. "Does Jesus have to walk on water twice to make his point" and "For everything you do in life sweetheart theres a price to pay, you pay it up front at the beginning or you pay it at the back end" The music is masterful, and I include the cover versions in saying that. My favourites as performed by Dylan /Fate are "I'll remember you " which I find superior to the 'Empire Burlesque' version and "Blowin in The Wind" which comes close to the end of the film and which every word of , acts as a summary to the film .

On the 17 May 2003, I saw Carolyn Hester & David Blume in concert for the very first time , and of course that was the date of [The third annual John Green Day](#) held at the Moat House in Northampton . It was a fantastic event and one that will stay in my memory for a long time. I did not know John Green but from what I have heard about him, I would say that this was my loss. I thought it was a very nice touch by Carolyn to actually mention john during her rendition of "I have a dream " a song that was written by David Blume and Jerry Keller on the night that Martin Luther King was murdered . Carolyn and David's set in Northampton was an extraordinary link to the very bohemian Greenwich Village scene of the early sixties, that Dylan became such a huge part of . She told an amusing story of one of her first meetings with Bob at Gerde's Folk

City, of how Mike Porco would revert to his native Italian, when the subject of money came up. Richard Farina Carolyn's first husband and another Bob link, was the author of the her first number "Pack up Your Sorrow's" after which we were treated to a live version of a song that is featured on the recently discovered Westinghouse film 'Folk Songs, and more Folk Songs' "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream".

Carolyn and David performed only one Dylan composition in "Playboys and Playgirls" a song that she performed way back in 1965 at The New York Town hall, where she added an improvised verse concerning Ringo Starr, the track was subsequently featured on her live album 'Carolyn Hester at The Town Hall'.

The previous years John Green day, also at The Moat House, featured a very moving tribute to John, that somehow made John's gentleness manifest. Featured on two large screens, a simultaneous showing of John Green's family snapshots, and the Sinatra birthday tribute from 1995, with Bob singing a fittingly gentle version of "Restless Farewell".

On the fourteenth day of December 2003, a baby girl 8 lb 6oz, came into this world, [Hollie Louise](#) is our second grandchild.

2003 was also the year that I received an invitation from John Stokes to join in the fun at [Freewheelin-on-line](#). I was very pleased to be asked and accordingly maybe I should introduce myself. I will beg off doing so for the moment, if that's all the same, maybe a word or two next month.

[TROUBADOUR Early & Late Songs of Bob Dylan](#)
[Andrew Muir](#)

I liked this book! The introduction was a breath of fresh air to me air that I wish a lot of other writers, and not just those who write things Dylan, would inhale.

Andrew Muir opened his introduction with the following "For those unfamiliar with any previous writings I have done, I would like to explain my critical stance. I defined it in my first magazine on Dylan, 'Homer, the slut', as 'analytical but understandable' but the best explanation of it comes from elsewhere. There is a series of books entitled 'Literature in Perspective' whose general introduction states

'...the critics and analysts, mostly academics, use a language that only their fellows in the same discipline can understand. Consequently criticism, which should be 'as inevitable as breathing'-an activity for which we are all qualified-has become the private field of a few warring factions...'

I myself have described the work of those "few warring factions" as a smokescreen of intellectualism, so Andrew's introduction warmed me for the writing to follow. Please don't get the idea that just because Andrew's view on a writers analytical persuasions or rather how they are delivered, concur with mine ,to be the sole reason for my enjoyment of his work, far from it , his previous book 'Razor's Edge' is one that I have read more than once .

The honesty that I found so attractive in the introduction of 'Troubadour' was present in the previous work, especially in his account of coming face to face with, and he makes no bones about it, his idol. The account in itself, and its downright honesty, gives the reader security, trust in what this author writes. Although the whole point of any critical analysis, is the writer's point of view, too much immediate emphasis can be placed upon it by the reader. Therefore to absorb the reader in a point of view and not to alienate in any dictatorial manner I feel to be of the utmost importance. To fully achieve this writer needs to establish his integrity in the early stages of his book. I think that this is achieved in 'Troubadour'.

Johnny Cash was much more than just a country singer, he wrote his songs, mostly from an honest and humane standpoint. His gospel music was never sanctimonious, and his protests very often able to see both sides of the argument. Like his great friend Bob Dylan, Cash cannot be categorized. June Carter Cash, who won a Grammy for her solo acoustic album 'Press On' in 1999, and her beloved husband Johnny, died, romantically, five months apart from each other. June who was 73, passed away on May 15 with Johnny 71 following on September 12 2003, Both were taken from The Baptist hospital, Nashville, Tenn. This of course, was one of the sadder Dylan related events of the past year, Johnny and June Carter Cash leave us though the wealthy legacy of their great music.

It is only a quarter of a century ago, that the Internet was hidden from view. Outside of scientific laboratories and for the use of corporate information, only real enthusiasts were in the know. These days there is a global network of millions of computers, a lot of them in domestic use. The technology has served us well, not least the Dylan fans. Perhaps not as far back as fifteen years ago, the circulation of concert tapes among fans was non existent, in comparison to these days, when nearly all Bob Dylan shows are taped, and quite a lot are filmed also. The Internet allows for all the constant swapping of information, on what is happening, what songs are being played, what shows we have got hold of, and of course the postal service does the rest.

So what is the point in telling you this that you already know!
None other than to take stock, and to realize maybe that we are spoilt rotten!!

[Bob Dylan on Hybrid Super Audio CD \(SACD\)](#)

Another reason to celebrate the year 2003 was the release of these discs. "This is more than a gift. It's a dowry" said Bill Flanagan of CBSnews.com (He was referring to the Sony box set release) It can be argued that these technological advanced items are just an excuse by Sony to make us buy the same old thing again, and maybe it is. - Oh all right then, it is!! But we don't have to buy, and it is always there as the ultimate luxury, should we decide to. Let's be grateful that Dylan's people are finally chucking this stuff at us by the bucket load. Everybody does not have access to the Internet, or indeed own a computer. All the more reason then to take note and be thankful of all the extra releases that are coming our way these days ,even if a few of them should have been released years ago. If you are reading this now, it is most likely, unless you have nipped in next door, or are in the local library, that you do indeed own a computer and have access to the Internet ,and consequently you are sat in a room bursting at the seams with Dylan related paraphernalia.

I have decided against any numerical order in the above accounts. Placing the birth of my granddaughter in a 1 to 10 situation could get me into hot water! Whether that be with Dylan people or my family I will leave you to guess.

Happy New Year



Chris's Top Ten

Chris's Top Ten

By Chris Cooper

Another year over. Another Christmas Turkey consumed in the name of excess. I dunno why we have to do these things, I always regret them afterwards. But then a wise man once told me that it was not the things you do that you regret, but the things that you do not do! Oh well. One thing for sure, Christmas also means another Top Ten for all those in Freewheelin' land. So without further ado, here it is..

Of course I am not silly enough to list 1-10 as you can be sure that we could rearrange this by the time you get it, so this time let me divide things into subcategories first. I think I can shuffle my top ten into three main areas

NEW RECORDED MUSIC

NEW SHOWS

NEW EXPERIENCES

So lets start from the top

NEW RECORDED MUSIC.

I listen to a lot of things these days, far more than just good ol' Bob, but of course we have to keep this with some sort of Bob link, don't we? We don't? OK then.

I continue to listen to lots of jazz and lately jazz piano features more and more. I would choose two of these items for my top ten

ESBJORN SVENSSON TRIO - Strange Place For Snow

A modern trio from Sweden, I had heard them on the radio a few times but nothing prepared me for their set at the Cheltenham Jazz Festival this year. They were mesmerizing. And this, their latest album is a stunner that I play a lot. Great in the car as I drive across the quite Fens. They are playing Cambridge Corn Exchange in February and I am really looking forward to seeing them again

KEITH JARRETT Up For It

I have listened to Keith for a lot of years now but this live set recorded with his usual trio is a real gem. He sound completely involved and the interplay with the band is astonishing. I haven't seen Keith in many years live, sure wish he'd get around more, but till he does, this is a good substitute.

MILES DAVIS The Complete Jack Johnson Set (5 CDS)

I am a long time Miles nut. This material, featuring Miles with an electric band has been long anticipated as the original Jack Johnson album was a killer in it's day. This contains all the sessions complete, and is really an interesting set. In the copious notes Teo Macero (long time Miles producer) refers to the sessions as "the greatest rock record of all time" that's a helluva statement, but amazingly may not be that far from target. This is joyous, enervating music that you really should hear.

I was gonna stop at three, even thou there no Bob here. I feel I should list the **15 SACD reissues** here as a favourite. Is it Ok if I list them all as one choice? If I had to pick a personal favourite I would say that Another Side Of is the most impressive, but if you are a real Bobophile you will get them all.

But there is even one more choice. One album that I only got at the start of December actually that has had an extra-ordinary effect on me. A record that has me reapraising my interests, which I like to think is a healthy thing.

The album folks is

GILLIAN WELCH & DAVID RAWLINGS Hell Among The Yearlings

I had heard a few live tapes of this lady before, but must have been only half listening. I bought this in a sale, there were three cds of hers in the sale, I tried this one. Took it home and put it on, and impressed is not doing this justice. This woman has one of the most sincere, hard voices I have ever heard. Some of the songs on here with gorgeous acoustic accompaniment from David Rawlings quite literally took my breath away. From the desolation of "The Devil had a Hold of me". To the earnest lust of "Honey Now" and the staggering emotion of "I'm not afraid to die". This whole album is just amazing. The most honest record I have heard this year I think. Of course I rushed back to get the other two albums but could only find one more "Time (The Revalator)" and yes it is also very impressive, but little could approach the impact that this album made on me.

So talking of impact on me, lets move on to **NEW SHOWS**

This year this is really easy isn't it? It's so refreshing, so rewarding when you can hold your head up and say "It's the Bob shows" because lately , if we are all honest this may not have been the case. But this time it is true. He was amazing wasn't he. The best shows I have seen since 1990 for certain. I went to all the UK shows and they all had their moments, I came out of each one glad I was a Bobfan. But here we are being selective so lets pick a few then.

I guess if I am going to narrow the field I would choose, **Wembley Nov 15th** Because he seemed so full of life and so energetic. I was so shocked to hear he was unwell after this. It was a strong spirited performance. Then of course there was **Brixton Nov 25th**. My personal favourite for a whole variety of reasons but to name at least two Hard Rain and Mr Tambourine Man. These were terrific performances as Dylan was celebrating what we all could see was a return to form. I would list Hammersmith also, (who would forget Romance in Durango) but the real standout has to be **Shepherds Bush Nov 23rd** we were not expecting all those amazingly unusual songs, the air of anticipation was so strong I could touch it, and if you were there then you will know what I mean, I will certainly never forget that one.

OK, with eight gone we reach the last section **NEW EXPERIENCES**

Well certainly I have to mention (yet again) the arrival of **Broadband Internet** status for me. Suddenly there are lots of shows available to download easily, the resources that we now have access to are quite outstanding. Yes there are risks involved, viruses and such like. But as in all things when you start running for the first time you inevitably fall over, and there lots of races to run here yet. But its worth the odd fall for the things that you gain. Give it a try.

An the last one? Well that FW world reaches a natural climax each year at **JOHN GREEN DAY** we had JG3 last year, and after some problems and a little hesitation we are heading into JG4 in March. It goes on, relentlessly some may say, but that was the way my old mate the kidda would have wanted it. It's good to know that we are still doing this, it's a lot of work and new blood is required at times, but on the day it's always an amazing experience. I guess John and I will have a few disagreements, I guess we will both be ready to quit a few times. But this year we have a new team leader in Keith Agar, I think it's healthy that this is happening, and I would sincerely hope that I see you all there. For a song , a laugh and drink to the greatest Dylan collector of them all..

Till next time...

WHAT WAS IT YOU WANTED? BY JIM GILLAN

Blast! It's that time of year again. BLOODY lists. Hate 'em, especially when they have anything to do with things I might enjoy. There's far too much of a lowest common denominator/bonding/social norm dimension to all that guff. And I hate Christmas. But the Spoke spake and I don't want to disappoint him, which means that by extension I have to invite the rest of you to digest my offal offerings. Though the wise and perceptive might pass swiftly on. But for those who find a certain *frisson**, one manifestly not attributable to the *frimas*** , in desperate meanderings, the following is (a) ENTIRELY true and (b) has within it many of the things that I hold dear (ie my 'best of), though not in any order. And it revolves around underwear, on which (according to the Spoke) I am *Freewheelin*'s lead authority.

So then, to set the scene, it's Nice airport, one September morning, about five, maybe seven ago, depending on which time frame you are using and which dimension you wish to view things from. Actually, in some circumstances I can think of, this is all yet to happen, something that is spookily true of Dylan singing Peter Case's rather wonderful 'Entella Hotel'. Anyway, I, and my keepers, (somewhat euphemistically, very thoughtfully, but entirely inaccurately described by some as my friends), were on our way back from a week-long climbing trip to the crags at Mouries, Orgon and Aureille. Belters all.

Now then, whilst it is true that all airports - and by extension, the shops in them - tend to look the same, there are some often subtle differences. So, whilst Manchester, Gatwick, Heathrow and so on all have Knickerbox and the Sock Shop selling *underwear*, there is a shop in Nice airport that sells not underwear, but *lingerie*. The window display featured the usual mix of impossibly beautiful models in glossy photos, as well as tasteful arrangements of the garments (if such glorious creations can be given such a prosaic label) themselves. Not cheap - 2,590 francs (about £260 for those of you who have forgotten old currency conversions) for an admittedly very nice lace and satin cream basque with six, rather than the usual four, suspenders. *Trés chic, n'est ce pas?* Deep breath from my buddy Keith, gentle moan from someone. Could have been me, but might have been a familiar. Anyway, in we went.

The assistant, who I suspect considered herself completely versed in the wayward behaviour of the sub-species loosely described as 'male', cocked an elegant eyebrow and uncoiled sinuously from her chair. Long legs, sheathed (as it soon became evident when she deliberately turned to check her impeccable appearance in a full-length mirror) by seamed stockings, uncrossed with a sensuous grace that would have felled most. But having lived in Yorkshire long enough to

become accustomed to Wakefield lasses wearing very little (though when it snows, the softies amongst 'em have *allegedly* been seen in thongs), Mam'selle left us admiring, but unshaken.

If this display of strength and steely purpose discomfited her, it didn't show beyond a sudden flash in her luminous, but somehow fathomless eyes. Her perfect lips parted slightly and her tongue flicked briefly against her upper lip. Long, perfectly coiffured hair, the colour of rare gold was tossed imperiously back as she slowly brushed the fingers of her left hand back and forth along the lapel of her Versace tailored jacket. Deep red nail varnish, (impeccably applied of course), exactly matched the shade of her lipstick. An elusive hint of *Femme* was carried before her as she took one step, then two, towards us. How is it possible in heels so high to move with such grace? How can the simple act of walking be full of such promise? How can a skirt so closely cut sway so invitingly? Her eyes smoldered, the air crackled. In a voice that Bardot would have died for she breathed "bonjour Messieurs...vous désirez?" In the silence, her words hung like ice crystals on the trees, yet the air was as sultry as that of a Caribbean evening.

"How do, lass!" we chummily replied, Keith even going so far as to thrust out his hand (I think) to shake. She didn't even blink. "Ma fois! You look so...so...*cosmopolitan*, so *urbane*... Forgive me! I did not realise you are English! Is it that you like our *lingerie*, that you 'ave someone très special, très beautiful, in mind?

Now, call me a pushover (I am, but call me it anyway - I like the sound of it), but I was charmed. Though not enough to fail to recognise the old phonus balonus. She didn't want us; she wanted our credit cards! Mistaking our silence for awe, she dropped her voice an impossible octave and again said "you like our *lingerie*?" Well, three can play at that game "Yes, very much, except in England we pronounce it 'lingery', on account of it's nice to linger round the *lingerie*". Her eyes glazed in a momentary confusion, but seasoned professional that she was, she recovered and said with a smile and accent that hinted at as yet unimagined pleasures, "I'm sorry. I don't understand so good your English. Please forgive me for being such a silly little girl...'Ow you say..? Ah oui! I mean would you like to 'ave a look at our *lingerie*'?"

"Yes, we would very much like to look. But in England we say 'lurk'. It sounds much the same as look, but 'lurk' conveys so much more". "*Luuurrrkk?* You wish to *lurk* at the *lingerie*?" "Exactly! - But remember! It's *lingery*! Because it is ALWAYS important to properly *finger* the *lingery*! It's why we wish to lurk in the first place". (By way of an aside, and least anyone think that this isn't serious, *lingerie* must always be treated with respect. *Lingerie* has little or nothing in common with *underwear*, despite some superficial similarities. *Lingerie* has nuances and subtleties that can only be revealed by finesse. Granted, there are times when it has to stand a good tugging, but the discerning amongst you don't need instructions. Indeed you already recognise the massive difference between *instruction* and *invitation*, even though the words used may seem like the former.)

At this point, a button on her jacket popped, emotion having proved too much for the tailoring. Had they been present. Mills & Boon novelists would have had all the bosom heaving they

could handle. As it was, it was left to Keith and I to help her back to her seat and minister to her needs. Keith gave her his last wine gum, which is indicative of his generous spirit. Nicole (for that turned out to be her name) later wrote to me to say that she had to study the security camera tapes for weeks before she understood completely what had been going on. She said that first she was angry, thinking we had been making fun of her. Then she was embarrassed, realising that she had been guilty of many assumptions, even prejudices. But finally she said she was happy when she realised what we had done. Which was show her that all the things that she had made herself a part of, were of no real value. Alors! She quit the job, gave up her boyfriend and his enormous chateau, tore up her address book, stopped going to therapy and took up climbing. “But I kept all the *lingerie*,” she said, “as I realise that what can seemingly be indulgent and frivolous is really very necessary.”

Well, I suppose I should say that I hope this meets with your approval. In truth I don't care whether it does or not, but as it's (allegedly) the season of goodwill, I'll stretch a point.

A bientôt! Jacques

* shiver

** wintry weather



Safety First

(The Joys and Woes of 2003)

There's seven people dead
On a South Dakota farm
There's seven people dead on a South Dakota farm
Somewhere in the distance
There's seven new people born.

Ballad of Hollis Brown

Bob Dylan (1962)

Joy & Woe are woven fine,
A Clothing for the soul Divine;
Under every grief & pine
Runs a joy with silken twine,
Is it is right it should be so;
Man was made for Joy & Woe,
And when this we rightly know,
Thro' the World we safely go.

Auguries of Innocence

William Blake (1803)

It's a comforting thought isn't? To go safely through the world it is necessary to suffer the woes as well as savour the joys. That was William Blake's 'Law of Contraries': every good deed must be balanced by something evil. Without the contraries of attraction and repulsion; love and hate, there could be no progression for, according to Blake, human thought and life need the stimulus of active and opposing forces to give them movement. We just can't go around being happy all the time, and if we do then we ain't getting it right. It doesn't of course make the woes any more easy to take (and sometimes they are very hard to take indeed) but, if you carry Blake's philosophy on board, then it certainly makes the joys more pleasurable because you know that it is your Divine right to have them!

Dylan expresses a similar sort of thing in that last verse from Hollis Brown. Whilst on the one hand he depicts a mass suicide following the despair of poverty and starvation; at the same time he presents an image of new life with all the promise of a new start. What has always

intrigued me about that last verse is the idea of seven ‘new people’ being born. Babies are born, infants are born, kids are born but, in general usage, ‘people’ are usually adults. So perhaps those ‘seven new people’ are in fact being born again, rejuvenated by some pleasure that has come their way. Whatever way you look at it, that last verse encapsulates Blake’s two pronged vision of life’s bare necessities.

Now what you may ask (and you usually do) has all this got to do with my Top Ten of 2003? Well, I thought that I would play safe this year and try to balance the books by splitting my top ten into five joys and five woes. Once I have got that out of the way, perhaps I will go safely through the world for another year although, just thinking about the possible inclusions, it does seem that the seriousness of the woes blasts the pleasure of the some of joys out of sight. I just hope that Mr. Blake has got it right. In no particular order of preference then, but a soft one to start with:

1. Visions of Johanna – Joy.

So what was that all about then? Well, actually it was about 65,000 words: a fixation; an obsession; a bloody marathon. ‘Visions’ took over my Dylan thinking life for about two and a half years. During those idle moments over that period whenever I had time to think, like whenever I was stuck in traffic jams; or whenever I was stuck in a lift; or whenever I was stuck inside of Ikea stores and bus stations, all the characters from ‘Visions’ paraded themselves in front of me, jockeying for position, crying out to be named. Of course Joan of Arc, with her waving banner of female supremacy, always headed the procession and it was the power of she, combined with the power of Bob, who started and finished the whole thing. Blessed lady; blessed gentleman. The joy was in the ending: a return to normality: the black- eyed dog beaten. For another day.

2. Visions of Johanna – Woe.

The woe of concentrating all my mental fight on just one Dylan subject for such a long period of time means that I have overlooked other, more recent, Bob works. For instance, ‘*Love and Theft*’ has gone relatively unconsidered by this scribe – including all that hullabaloo about the lines Dylan lifted from the Mafia memoirs that is *Confessions of a Yakuza*. Then there is the song ‘*Cross the Green Mountain*’ which needs some proper colouring in and of course the movie *Masked and Anonymous*. ‘Strewth, I’ve not seen it on the big screen yet. For that matter, over here in the outback of the UK, nor has anyone else! I suppose that, for everything, there is a time and that my time with these Bob works will come. But please, black eyed dog, please stay in your kennel for a while, there’s a good boy.

3. Bob Dylan in the UK – Joy.

It’s always a joy to be on the road with Bob, and this year was no exception. Outings with friends, meeting up with people at the gigs, taking time away from work are all part of the pleasures. OK, Bob isn’t the performer he was 20 years ago but, on that score, neither am I and neither are you. It was great to see him in his sixty second year surrounded by good musicians

and pleasing the crowd. I enjoyed most of the concerts and 'Romance in Durango' at Hammersmith was the icing on a well baked cake.

4. Bob Dylan in the UK – Woe.

As I have said, the seriousness of the woes seem to blast the pleasures of the joys out of sight and what follows is a sad and tragic tale. Until about a week before the show, I had a spare ticket for the Birmingham, NEC show. Keith Agar knew about this and, by coincidence, he bumped into a lady friend in a supermarket in Oakham. The lady's husband, a guy named Paul, was something of a Dylan fan and after various telephone calls, Paul got my ticket and I arranged to meet him at the venue. We duly met up and, over a pre-gig drink, Paul told me about how he had a wild weekend with his elder brother back in 1978 when they saw Dylan at Blackbushe and then went on to the British Grand prix at Brands Hatch. Paul said that he and his brother went to many Dylan gigs after that and it was something that they really enjoyed doing together. Tragically, Paul's brother had died of a heart attack at the age of 42 and this was the first Dylan gig Paul had been to without his brother. I stood with Paul during the show and sensed his loss of the guy who should have been standing next to him. When the show was over, Paul seemed to have overcome a battle of emotion and was ultimately pleased to have been at another Dylan show that, in thought if not in kind, he and his brother once again enjoyed together.

5. John Green Day 3 – Joy.

Despite the fire alarm in the middle of the night, and the dismal failure of the proposed panel discussion, this was another great weekend in Northampton. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and indeed we had no requests for refunds! One of the particular pleasures for me personally was to have Al Masciocchi, a good friend of John's from the States, staying with us. There were many highlights on the day and of course Keith Agar was as cool as ever in his presentation.

6. John Green Day 4 – Woe.

Because of the incredible amount of time required to be spent in organizing the arrangements for these conventions, to include the administration side of things, I have had to pull back from organizing John Green Day 4 which is proposed for March 27th 2004. The organization for this has been taken over by Keith Agar and I will give him all the help and support that I can. It was a decision I had to make with some real regret but with other pressures on my time, and taking into account the number of hours in any given day, the decision just had to be made.

7. freewheelin-on-line – Joy.

I suffered a slight tremor this year when Chris Cooper, again because of the restraints of time, decided to withdraw from the Freewheelin internet project. With the added assistance of John Nye, our wonderful Webmaster, the first Bob Dylan magazine on the internet has however, continued to flourish. In fact, over the four day period between 5th – 8th January 2004, we had 537 hits on the site: an average of 135 a day! And most of these followed through to the library

at Freewheelin House which means that the magazine is being widely read. John and I have some things in mind for the future to develop the site but it certainly is a joy to be able to publish our continuing chronicle to such a wide audience.

8. freewheelin-on-line – Woe.

As I have mentioned, John Nye has been instrumental in the success of freewheelin-on-line and, without his efforts, the site probably wouldn't exist or at least wouldn't look any where near as good as it does. John and his family have however suffered greatly this year as a result of the serious ill health of John's wife, Phil. It just does not seem to me that this woe can be balanced by any amount of joy, apart from perhaps the joy of the knowledge that Phil will make a full recovery and that John, Phil and their three daughters can put that last awful year behind them. John is a modest guy and would never ask for favours, but for those of you who are fortunate enough to enjoy the certainty that putting your hands together and bending your knees can really make a difference, I ask you to remember John, one of us, and his family in your prayers.

Now I am going to reverse the order of joys and woes

9. Freewheelin – Woe.

My only woe is in the departure of the Freewheelers who have left the group this year – Neil Watson and Robert Forryan. Neil, in particular, had been with the group from the outset and I know that it was a wrench for him to leave. But priorities change; other things take precedence and of course you have to follow your heart. In addition to that, I probably bored them into submission with my endless bleating on about '*Visions of Johanna*'! Both Robert and Neil provided some great contributions to the mag during their stay and they left, as they will remain, true friends of the group.

10. Freewheelin – Joy.

So here we still are. To strengthen the things that remain: the current Freewheelers. Two 'new people' have been born into the group this year namely Martin Stein and Michael Crimmins. To Martin and Michael: I hope that your stay will be long and happy. To all other Freewheelers: could I say what a joy it has been to read your words this year. Thank you for keeping the show on the road. Take a bow my friends – you have been brilliant. But as the curtain closes and the house lights disclose the debris of the deserted audience, think not of looking back. The future is the new black. Your bums, with or without underwear, will all look great in this. And you know what I am going to say: yes my fellow comrades in words: **the best is always yet to come!**

IT TAKES A LOT TO LAUGH

WHEN THE INTERVIEW STARTS BADLY

No. 1



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