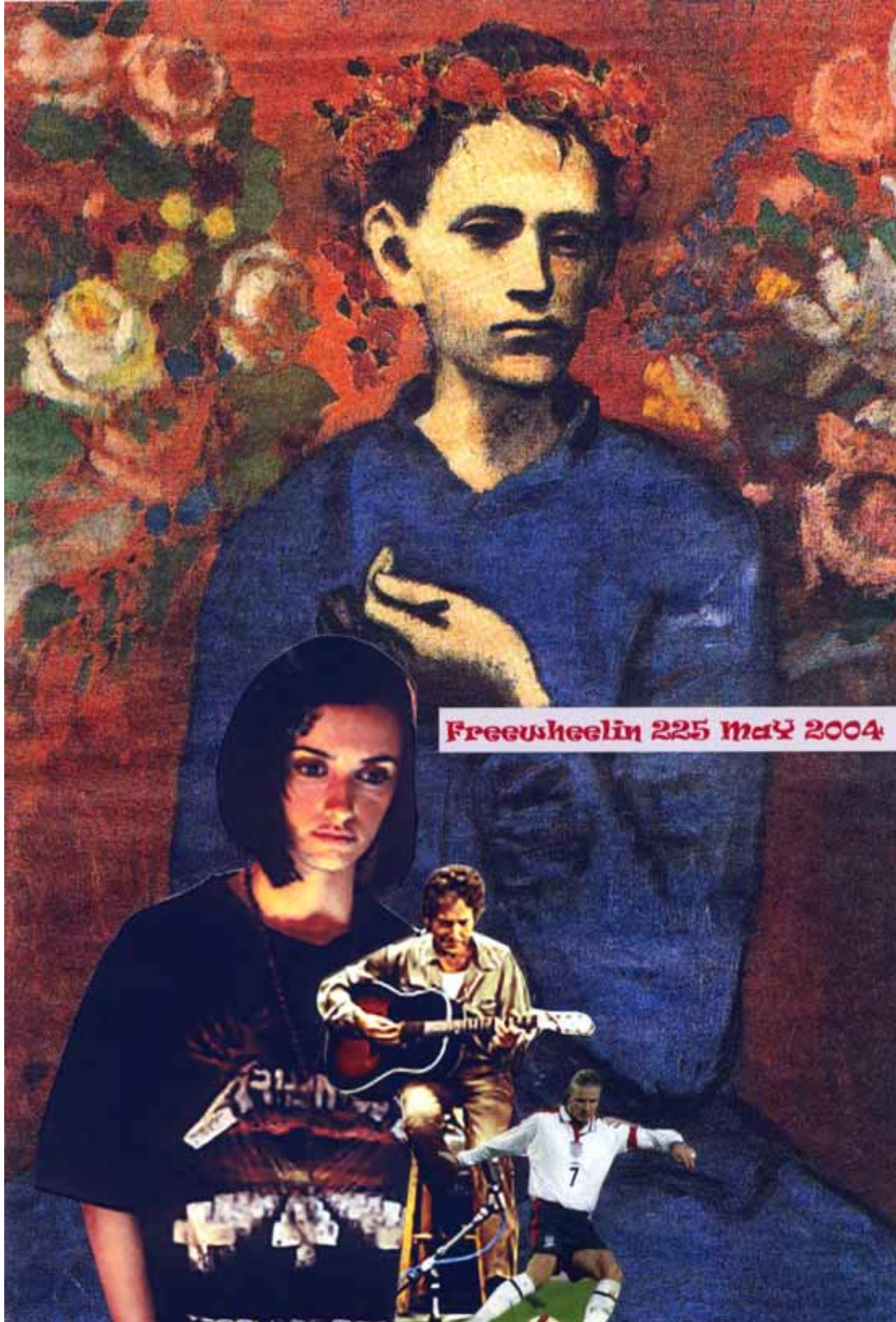


Freewheelin-on-line Take Twenty Seven



Coverdown

Freewheelin 225

On the 5th day of May 2004, in the perfectly cooled air of a Manhattan auction room, a happening occurred that caused a gasp across the universe of art. The happening involved the disposal of auction lot number 7 and the gasp occurred when the Auctioneer pounded his gavel to declare that the item on display had just become the world's richest painting. Lot number 7 was Picasso's portrait of 'Boy With A Pipe' and the price paid, a staggering, and anything but cool, £58 million or, in Yankee dollar terms, 104 million dollars.

That boy with that pipe has found his way onto a Freewheelin cover where the painting's Spanish creator shares some space with Pagan Lace, a lady also from Spain. Both Pagan and that boy, who doesn't look like he his going to offer his pipe to anyone, look down at Jack who is strumming away on his guitar, practicing some chords, showing to his Spanish audience another side of Bob Dylan. Perhaps, when Dylan paints his own masterpiece, it will be the morning after a cold, dark night on the Spanish Stairs (not to be confused with all those stairs in Dylan's masterpiece of a movie).

One of the things that intrigues me about Picasso's record breaking 'Boy' is that crown upon his head: a crimson flame of roses tied through his ears perhaps. Which brings me back to Pagan and Jack and the opening line of 'My Back Pages', the first song on the soundtrack album from their joint film venture. And if you look at Another Side of Bob Dylan you will find a song with 'Spanish' in the title just four tacks away from 'My Back Pages'.

So what is all this all about Spain anyway? Nothing at all really except that: of the 21 dates on his 2004 European tour, 1 is in Wales, 1 is in Portugal, 2 are in each of the countries England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany , France and Italy and no less than 7 are in Spain. And not forgetting of course that this is the country where our soccer captain plies his trade. But enough of Spain, could I venture to utter:

Come on England!!

Freewheelin-on-line take twenty seven **(freewheelin 225)**



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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 225

Hello again

I am getting ready, bracing myself, for what I hope will be a large input of films when the Summer Tour starts in a few days. (Well we can hope) until then here are a few older films that seem to have escaped review up till now.



D4 A8 S8 H8 F 7 I BL4

05-08-1989 GRAND RAPIDS

81.00

Most Likely You'll Go your Way/ Absolutely Sweet Marie/ Masters Of War/ You're a Big Girl Now/ The Man In Me/ Watching The River Flow/ Its All Over Now Baby Blue (d)
Man Of Constant Sorrow @/ Hattie Carroll @ / You Don't Know Me/ I Shall Be Released/
Seeing The Real You At Last/ Like A Rolling Stone
Mr Tambourine Man/ Knockin On heavnes Door/ Maggie's Farm

Back in '89 Bob was quite a mover, as this show demonstrates well. He's in great voice and form. The sound again redubbed this time from an excellent source. This show has unusual tracks and a very lively atmosphere, not to mention good ol' G.E. thrashing away. The whole film has a slightly "smokey" appearance which makes me think it may not have come from a master copy. But that's a minor gripe, get to see this one, if only to remind yourself of past glories.



D4 A8 S8 H7 F7 IBL4

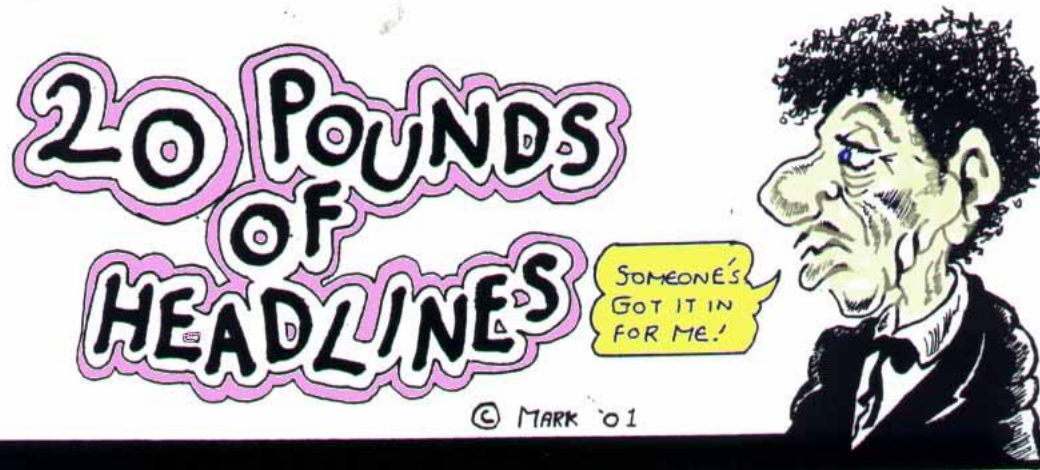
10-08-2001 DES MOINES, IOWA

114.00

Oh Babe It Ain't No Lie/ To Ramona/ Desolation Row/Maggies Farm/I Threw It All
Away/Gotta Serve Somebody/Masters Of War/Love Minus Zero/It Ain't me Babe/Till I
Fell In love With You/Just Like A Woman/Drifters Escape/ Leopardskin PillBox Hat//
Country Pie/Like A Rolling Stone/ Knockin On Heavens Door/ All Along the
Watchtower/Forever Young/ Highway 61 Revisited/ Blowin In The Wind

It's a real bonus of the DVD revolution that older stuff like this, which previously was not appearing (probably due to high transfer costs) is now circulating. The audio has been very well redubbed from a very good audio tape. The video is mostly clear and Bob's in good fettle throughout. Setlist sadly is a bit predictable.

Till Next Time



By Mark Carter

Lots more German reviews from the Autumn 2003 tour to get through this month, so let's not hang about.

Kicking off with Leipzig, where Evelyn Schwarz of the *Thüringische Landeszeitung* particularly enjoyed a “striking”, if “off-beat”, Mr Tambourine Man and where Susann Leutritz of *Sächsischezeitung* fame found herself agreeing with one member of the audience who shouted out that Dylan had never been better than on that day. Utter tripe, of course, but it's good to know that the “He's never been better” brigade are still out there.

Still with Leipzig, *Freie Presse's* Matthias Zwarg worried that perhaps Dylan was playing keyboards because the real keyboard player was on holiday (yes, and he has been since 1987) and singled out a “beautiful” Senor as a highlight.

Meanwhile, Wolfgang Greiner, owner of the Hotel Furtenhof in Leipzig was expressing his astonishment to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* that Dylan didn't speak to him during his brief stay or, indeed, sign his copy of the Greatest Hits album. “We have had many superstars here,” he gasps, “Herbert Gronemeyer, AC/DC, the Rolling Stones, but I've never experienced anything like this.” Dylan's entourage booked 14 rooms, 3 of them for Dylan himself. “But,” reveals Greiner, “We never knew for sure exactly where our guest was.” That was a bit careless, wasn't it?

Onto Graz, where Austria's *Kleine Zeitung* revealed that Dylan attended the soundcheck, but wore a hood throughout, played with his back to the hall and didn't sing at all (if you would believe some British newspapers, this is how Dylan plays all of his shows nowadays). The show itself didn't disappoint *Kleine Zeitung's* Walter Titz, though he felt - not unreasonably, methinks - that the emphasis on a rockier, heavier sound this time around

meant that some of the subtler numbers such as Bye And Bye and Tweedle Dee And Tweedle Dum were lost in the onslaught.

Der Standard's Christian Schachinger enjoyed Graz overall, though you wouldn't necessarily be able to tell by reading his review: "...He barks in front of old people, who he has already seen too often in his life in the front rows of his concerts and who know the lyrics better than he does; 'I've had too much of your company'." Having dealt with Dylan's interaction with his faithful audience, Schachinger turns his attention to that other old reliable; his voice; "...His singing was charmingly flat, somewhere between a chronic smoker's cough and the barking of a street dog." Despite all of this - or, perhaps, because of it, Graz is voted "concert of the year". Similarly, Michael Anheier of the *Neues Volksblatt* titles his so-so review of Graz "A spider-legged, grey-faced old goblin" which is, you must admit, a bit of a change from all of those tired old "spokesman for a generation" monikers. "Bob doesn't sit," he informs us, "But he doesn't stand either. Like a hunchbacked vulture, he hangs at the inaudible piano and doesn't care for the audience in the hall...What he did to All Along The Watchtower is hard to describe: something comes up ominous and evil, taking hold of the people in the audience and finally the guys onstage. In the end they're growing together in a monstrous, steaming, infernal act."

Staying with Graz, Bernhard Fliher of the *Salzburger Nachrichten* enjoyed the concert but felt that Dylan was beginning to look - and show - his age and only during the encores did "the age fade away and the wrinkles smooth away".

By the time we got to Vienna we were half a million strong. Well, not quite, but, however many were in the audience doesn't really matter, since, by all accounts, they were a very unreceptive and unresponsive bunch. *Die Presse's* Samir H. Kock reckoned that Dylan played a tremendous show and that even his voice was top-notch, but "rarely has such an enthralling concert received such a limp reception". *Wiener Zeitung's* Francesco Campagner and Gerald Jatzek agreed, but reckoned that the band's "lively blues-rock" brought them out of their shells.

At Berlin, *Frankfurter Allgemeine's* Wolfgang Hilbig admitted that he is the same age as Dylan and saw his first Bob concert many moons ago, but, this time around, Dylan sang as though he were thirty years younger; "...If there is still something like rock 'n' roll and blues in the world, this man is the personification of it".

Munchen Merkur's Zoran Gojic enjoyed Munich just as much, especially Hattie Carroll, which he felt Dylan sang with so much passion it seemed as though his own lyrics would overwhelm him. At the same venue, *Donaukurier's* Philipp Schmatloch began the concert doubtful whether the "magic moments" at Dylan concerts that he'd heard about actually existed, but "I can't tell when and where, but somewhere between the opener To Be Alone With You and the brilliant All Along The Watchtower all doubts have vanished and have changed into indescribable enthusiasm".

Marco Schmidt of *t.z.* didn't enjoy Munich quite as much, judging by these comments; "...His singing is terrible, he's a miserable harmonica player and his guitar playing is amateurish. But he didn't play guitar at all at the Olympiahalle; he mistreated an electric piano instead." Still not convinced? Try this then; "...He garbles his classics beyond

recognition and reinvents them night after night like a painter overpainting his paintings again and again. He stretches the syllables, croaks, speaks through his nose and mumbles like Daffy Duck on dope”. For all of that, he admits that Bob is a “marvelous storyteller” and Hattie Carroll was a “heartrending ballad” that had the power to move the listener to tears.

Suddenteche Zeitung's Oliver Hochkeppel certainly had no problems with Dylan’s Daffy Duck impersonations at Munich, concluding that “this concert was a revelation, even for those who didn’t know what to do with the whining guitar player of the early years”.

The German edition of *Rolling Stone* despatched Maik Bruggemeyer along to Hamburg, and he was very impressed; “...His illness a few years ago forced him to abstain from playing harmonica for a while, now he plays piano instead of guitar because of other disabilities. Now, with nothing hanging in front of his breast, he sings better than he has in a long time.” Interestingly, this is one of the few reviews that suggests that Dylan’s preference of the piano over the guitar may be due to old age or medical problems, rather than a whimsical fancy.

At Freiburg, Bettina Schulte of the *Badische Zeitung* recognised that Dylan had no intention of pandering to nostalgia, “and that’s what makes him one of the greatest. It’s phenomenal how fresh, lively, powerful, how rocking with brute force this version of Highway 61 Revisited sounds”. On the other hand, *Oberbadisches Volksblatt's* Stefan Ummenhofer didn’t really enjoy the show, blaming a - in his view - rather unenthusiastic audience on the muddy sound and a listless Dylan. According to him, many attendees made do with “one close look at the legend and stayed for the rest of the concert near the beer stalls”. Whatever, Ummenhofer does single out three highlights; Don’t Think Twice, Highway 61 and an “endless” It’s Alright Ma.

Onto Frankfurt, where *Frankfurter Rundschau's* Harry Nutt considered the first third of the show to be marred by poor mixing and sound. This night’s version of All Along The Watchtower, he considers, may have been the best version ever performed, beating even Hendrix’s unique take on the song. *Frankfurter Allgemeine's* Edo Reents was also somewhat disappointed with the concert, concluding that Dylan looked tired, though he was unsure whether this was the aftermath of an exhausting concert or signs of a general weariness in the man; “...to say it visually, Summer Days sounded more like autumn this time”.

Offenbach Post's Christian Riethmuller certainly did not witness a tired Dylan or performance, expressing a (forlorn) hope that a live album of the tour might be released before Christmas. Some hopes, Columbia are still having problems getting a 1964 concert into the shops. Still, I guess that’s what we have b**tleppers for. *Allgemeine Zeitung's* Michael Jacobs also enjoyed the show, praising Dylan’s “unbelievable” band, especially the “fantastic lead guitar player Freddy Koella”. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I guess.

Marcus Hladek of the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* found the combined sound of “whining guitar” and Dylan's piano to be “surprisingly dynamic”, and that, once the encores came around, the audience came alive and there was no holding them back. Similarly,

Wiesbadener Kurier's Herbert Heil found the encores to be exciting in the extreme, especially All Along The Watchtower, "which can be called the highlight of a great concert".

Hartmut Wilmes, writing for *Kolnische Rundschau*, waxed equally lyrical about the Dusseldorf concert, especially the encores, which he thought were worth the price of admission alone. *Koln Stadt-Anzeiger's* Martin Oehlen also enjoyed Dusseldorf, reckoning that a "tender" Forever Young - as a fourth and final encore - was an appropriate sign-off for the show and the German tour; "...a song with all good wishes for a happy future."

Neue Rhein Zeitung's Jorg Bartel discovered, at Dusseldorf, a Highway 61 Revisited turned into "a heavy rock inferno". Furthermore, "Dylan played World War 3. Has he ever played louder?" Bernd Schuknecht of the *Rheinische Post* equally enjoyed the show, though concludes that Dylan's voice is now "a croaky mixture of Tom Waits, Willy Brand and a crow...(and is) a matter of taste". Still, he was surprisingly lively, given that he already appears to have one foot in the grave. "I don't believe it!!" (note to overseas readers; this is a veiled reference to a now-defunct British t.v. show, featuring OAP grump Victor Meldrew - a person that, as I reach my early 40s, I am slowly but surely adopting as my role model).

Final Dusseldorf review is by *Westdeutsche Zeitung's* Thomas Reuter, who found Dylan "brilliant, intoxicating and surprising". His voice is "more cooing and gurgling than singing" and Reuter reckons he performed The Times They Are A-Changin' especially gently. It must have been very gentle indeed, given that he didn't actually play it at the show!

A few UK stragglers to catch up with now, beginning with Simmy Richman, writing for some newspaper or other, who went along to Brixton and didn't like what he saw; "...he delivered every indecipherable line in that sandpaper bark and his band played pub-rock R&B like the bastard offspring of an unholy union between Dire Straits and Status Quo. If you are a fan; he was OK, he played lesser songs, he seemed disengaged, he barely looked up, he stripped vocal melody down to a random sequence of howls, yelps, growls and snarls...This is the sound of a man who's been going through the motions for so long he's forgotten how important a little "e" can be at the start of that word." And there was me thinking that Brixton was supposed to have been one of the better gigs!

A couple of days earlier, David Smyth of the *London Evening Standard* made his pilgrimage to Shepherd's Bush, where he seemed to witness an entirely different show; "...His singing was more expressive than it can sometimes be...the hint of a smile here and there, and one brief period of peculiar dancing, suggested he was enjoying himself almost as much as the lucky few revelling in the rare chance to see their hero at close quarters."

Meanwhile *The Independent's* Tim Cumming caught a rare viewing of Masked And Anonymous and, surprisingly enough, enjoyed it (with reservations, of course!); "...it is a flawed but fascinating success...None of it may make obvious sense, but the movie is brave enough not to deal in straight answers. Neither does Dylan."

Bernhard Flierer of Austria's *Salzburger Nachrichten* also saw the movie, but was somewhat less impressed; "...as a movie, it isn't much good. But it's a goldmine for Dylan experts." He advises us to file it alongside Renaldo And Clara and Tarantula.

Finally, just time to mention that Arne Willander of Germany's *Rolling Stone* gave the entire recent remasters series five stars (with special commendation to Bringing It All Back Home), before I switch the computer off (how things have changed; it doesn't seem five minutes since I used to switch the typewriter off, back in Ye Olden Days).

That's yer lot. See you same time, same place next month.



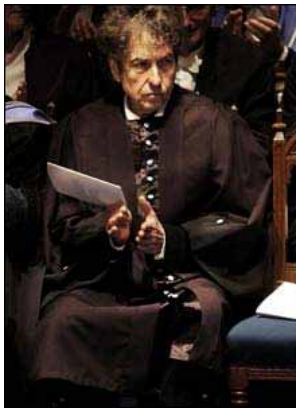


The **Whole Wide World** is watching

The Best of the Web by Martin Stein (With thanks to Expecting Rain)

This month an Illustrated Special Edition Collector's Issue!

1. ***My Best Friend The Doctor*** – The big news of course was Bob being awarded an honorary degree by St Andrew's University on 23rd June. Much media coverage produced the following pictures.



2. ***Everybody's Got Something To Sell*** – Rare Dylan collectibles, from posters and harmonicas to one of his own rabbit fur hats are up for sale at www.itsonlyrocknroll.com/catalog/auction_list.php?catunid=20
3. A new book, **Studio A: The Bob Dylan Reader** is due out on 30th October 2004. Edited by Benjamin Hendin, ISBN: 0393058441, the Hardback will be 288 pages long and retail for £13.58.
4. Bob's name has been given to a £1,400-a-night penthouse suite at the five-star Radisson Edwardian Hotel – formerly known as Manchester's Free Trade Hall!



5. ***Love Sick*** - Bob Dylan reportedly visited The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, where he did impromptu songs with harmonica and gave harmonicas out to sick children.



6. ***And All That Jazz*** - Dylan has appeared at the Jazz at Lincoln Centre Gala Benefit at the Apollo Theatre, New York. Backed by Wynton Marsalis and his band he performed It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry and Don't Think Twice, It's All Right.



7. ***Mystery Solved*** - A Belfast teenager who was captured on Eat The Document is well-known fiction writer Daniel Easterman. Three people - two pupils from RBAI and a girl (Josephine Herbert) from Victoria College - were interviewed outside the former Ritz cinema before Dylan's concert that night. One of the youngsters was Daniel Easterman, a pen-name used by Belfast-born Denis McEoin, who also writes under the name Jonathan Aycliffe. It is understood he currently lives in Newcastle upon Tyne. Speaking about Dylan in 1966 the young man, nicknamed Beaky, told the interviewer: "Sometimes he manages to hit the right note - to say the right things, but maybe he should read a few decent poets - Shakespeare perhaps."
8. ***Rolling Thunder*** - Is it Rolling, Bob?: A Reggae Tribute to Bob Dylan will be released by Sanctuary/ RAS Records on 16th August 2004. The album features a rare remix of I and I featuring the legendary drum and bass duo Sly & Robbie.
9. ***I Got My Mojo Workin'*** - The July edition of Mojo carries an interesting illustrated article on the 1978 tour.

TWO RIDERS APPROACHING



Larry Charles Interview –Part two

by Trev GibB

This is the concluding part of the interview, which commenced in the last issue.

Yes, the end of ‘Masked and Anonymous’ where he’s handcuffed in the van.

Yes and I thought to myself, you know, when I had the idea of that last shot of Bob’s face in the movie, you know that image just popped into my head and I loved that image. And then when I saw ‘Don’t Look Back’ I thought “God, that’s a beautiful companion piece now”, and again, blurring that line between fiction and reality, and despite the mythological fable-like quality of the movie, there’s also a documentary-like quality to it as well. And I love that idea of blurring that line.

Everything he does is pioneering, moving to the next stage, to something different and it’s very the case with this movie you’ve made with him, it’s very pioneering.

Good, good, thank you.

Also with Jeff Bridges there is a connection to the Dylan of 65-66, these characters all representing different things at once.

Yes, yes, and those connections work on some levels and they’re more apparent on some levels than others and its there for you to favour and explore and examine and analyse.

What gave you the whole idea for the Carnavalesque feel?

It just started out with conversations about some images that we liked and slowly it began to emerge out of that.

Yes and it adds to the depth of the film the need for the viewer to be digging and always find something else, something new.

Yeah, well for some people that's a great experience and there are people that just love to do that, and I love to do it. And I tried to make a movie that I wanted to see, ultimately, and so that's why that exists like that.

How did it feel to be moving from the territory of 'Curb Your Enthusiasm' to 'Masked and Anonymous'?

Well it was great, it's just an expansion of who I am. 'Curb Your Enthusiasm' taps into a lot of wonderful things and Larry David is brilliant in a very parallel way actually to Bob. I often compare them, because they're both sort of visionaries, they can do what they do, they can't alter their vision based on the market place. This is what they have to offer, if you like it, great, if you don't like it, this what they have, there's no choice in the matter.

Learning how to collaborate with Larry was good preparation for working with Bob in a lot of ways. In fact I'm about to give Larry, for Christmas, the 15 CD set.

The Remaster Series?

Yes, the Remaster Series. I'm gonna give him that, because he was not that conscious of Bob and he came to see the movie and he liked it and he liked the soundtrack, so I'm giving that as a gift.

The soundtrack itself is very clever, it has this multicultural aspect. The mixing of cultures is very apparent, That L.A., South American feel. Why did you go for that whole feel?

Well what I went for was a combination of things. First of all, I collected images photographs; journalistic photographs from third world countries for a couple of years. And I just saw similarities in them and at the same time I really spent a lot of time in downtown L.A. which is this juxtaposition of various culture, the sort of crossroads of numerous cultures, African, Spanish, Mexican, Central America, South America, Eastern European, American, poor, rich and then I would look at the these pictures of third world countries and they looked a lot like downtown Los Angeles and I started to sort of get this idea of the cacophony of this country, that if you look at one direction in Los Angeles you see Beverly hills and the beach, but if you look in the other direction it's a third world country. This kind of weirdly cacophonous, multi-ethnic, third world country and so I loved that idea of exploring that a little bit more deeply, and then I started thinking about the cover songs in different languages and then Jeff Rosen was generous enough to just open the vaults to me and give me access to all those covers. There's thousands and thousands of these foreign covers and I just started listening to them and some just drew you in so powerfully like the Japanese version of My Back Pages, yeah and "this is such a natural here". It also makes a statement in the movie that people don't realise the impact Bob Dylan has had on their lives, he's so pervasive its almost overwhelming.

Do you have a favourite cover?

Well I think the Japanese version of 'My Back Pages'... I was looking for a song to open the movie with and that song somehow combined the energy and the force and the power and the confusion and lucidity, it just said everything all at once to me. It really was a very inspiring moment and I recognised that could be the first song. So I love that, I really like almost all the music, there's so much that we couldn't put in the movie and so much we couldn't put on the soundtrack. And again it's amazing when you think about it that Bob has such a gigantic Japanese following, yet the difficulty

of translating him into Japanese is monumental apparently, and yet there is this incredible powerful cult around him in Japan.

Well when he goes to Japan it's always a huge thing.

It's a huge thing yes.

My favourite is the song that is used when Fate goes to visit his mother's grave and I think its Sertab's 'One More Cup of Coffee'.

Yes 'One More Cup of Coffee', fantastic also.

It has this real transcending feel, it rises, it has an almost synthetic, yet orchestrated feel to it.

Yes it's very dramatic that's one of my favourites as well. It has a dram to it a kinda Middle Eastern exoticism to it; a mystery. Again it captures the best of Bob's music, it reinterprets it.

Even the original has that Arabic feel:

Yes, yes, it does

Was the closing song going to be 'City of Gold'?

No. You know, again I only had a certain amount of input into the soundtrack and they felt they wanted to put some bonus tracks on that were not from the movie and I argued to put more stuff from the movie on the soundtrack. 'City of Gold's' a great song, which I loved, but I felt there were also songs from the movie we couldn't put on as well. They were pieces of songs that we used that we didn't get to put on the soundtrack. And maybe at some point again there will be a more, quote, 'definitive' version of the soundtrack.

Apart from complimenting the movie, the soundtrack is also works brilliantly as separate entity, but when you listen it enhances the vision you have of the film.

It's definitely a great album, I love the album and again you almost want more and there is a lot more out there obviously.

The soundtrack also works as a nice covers compilation.

Yes, yes, well I mean just the American stuff alone, the Jerry Garcia stuff and The Grateful Dead stuff and I mean I didn't even bother trying to use the Jimi Hendrix version of 'All Along The Watchtower' or Neil Young's 'Blowin' in the Wind', Neil Young does an amazing version of 'Blowin' in the Wind'.

Neil Yong did 'Blowin' in the Wind'? I've never heard that.

Ahh it's on one of his live albums. It is absolutely breathtaking. And there's a great version that I almost used of Bruce Springsteen doing 'Chimes of Freedom'. That is an amazing cover and so some of the American covers that are not quite as prevalent are amazing and intense.

What were the songs you shot for the film that didn't make the cut?

Yeah, well as I said when we filmed the music we kept the camera rolling. He was supposed to do six songs and he wound up doing 22. I think there are four of his

performances on the soundtrack. So that leaves like 18 songs that I have, fully filmed. There's probably a handful of those that are traditional songs that he reinterprets with the band.

'Dixie'

Yeah well 'Dixie' was done initially as a warm-up song for whatever the next song was and it was just so stirring, it was like, "let's film this!"

'Dixie' is absolutely awesome. It says so much about the film and the way it's sung is awesome.

Yes and the theme of that song and the history of that song says so much and resonates throughout the film as well. That was again one of those happy, quote, *accidents*, these synchronistic moment, where it's like wow you're justifying the movie with this song.

Well that's the great thing, the spontaneity, that's where I think great art lies, on the knife edge and it's when you take that jump the art comes through.

I agree with you totally...

What other plans for the DVD as such do you have, such as extra scenes and so forth?

Well that's about all I know about it really. I mean again my input on things like the soundtrack and DVD are: They come to me, they ask me my opinion, I give my input, my very impassioned input and then other people make final decisions about it and I had to let go of it to some degree on that level. And I'm sure it will be very high quality. You'll see a really high quality transfer of the high def, which is good.

What was it shot in again?

It's called 24p. 24 frames progressive scan. Its high definition and it's gonna look great in that format actually, so I'm happy about that. And in terms of stuff I know they're gonna put on, there's a lot of material that didn't make it into the final movie, some whole scenes that were cut and in a version of the movie that eventually didn't make it into the final version and those will be sort of added as bonus' as well as at least one song that we shot.

Did he record 'Standing in the Doorway'?

Yes he did and I think that will... I think that's going to make it onto the DVD actually. Beautiful version of it...

Well it took him a few years to perform it live, so when it happened it was a big thing.

Yeah it's a great version of it actually and also you'll see the uncut 'Cold Irons Bound' which is also a stirring version of that song.

Yeah, he has a great band too.

Yeah those guys are amazing. And again even that era, kinda is over in a sense. The band has gone through some personnel changes and so it captures that period with that band which was tremendous band for him, they were just really tight, really together, really knowledgeable, and you see them as you do in the movie, musically communicating with each other through the movie.

There's an understanding among them, as there is with the actors in the movie, an understanding of what needs to be achieved.

Right, well you have to get lucky sometimes. We had very game, risk taking people involved in the movie who were ready to commit, ready to take a leap and it produced an amazing thing you know.

Was, 'Tryin' To Get To Heaven', recorded for the film? Because it was suggested in the screenplay

'Tryin' To Get To Heaven'... I'm trying to remember frankly... 'Wicked Messenger'... It may have been. I can't remember right now... I think we did 'Tryin' To Get To Heaven'; yes I'm pretty sure we did it. Hold on one sec (leaves to find out)...

I think there's a section where....

Where Luke and John are talking about it.

Yes where I believe they're talking about life and death and applying it to 'Drifter's Escape', but I think in the screenplay it applies to 'Tryin' To Get To Heaven'.

Yes, that's right, I'm pretty sure. Well again it's one the things, it's part of the ambiguity and as Penelope says, "The songs are imprecise and open to interpretation". And that was one of those moments yes.

The fact that in the screenplay it says 'Tryin' To Get To Heaven' and you use 'Drifter's Escape' is interesting, but still acceptable, because it still applies to the song.

Well, and Bob loves the idea of playing with that. I might say, "Well you know the song's going to be fragmented" and he'd say, "Good, let's do that then", he's also for fragmenting, deconstructing whatever's constructive. "Let's see what happens if we break it apart, lets see what happens if we turn it upside down, lets see".

And why not?

And why not? Exactly

The film has a kind of Jazz element, its experimentative. Bob himself has that. People say he isn't a good singer or a good musician, but if you take away what people say, he is very much a Jazz musician. He works with improvisation, with phrasing. Even his melodies... He sings his songs differently each time, does counter melodies in opposition to the original tune.

Absolutely, he phrases things differently each time, he changes his voice. He has so much more control over his music than people recognise. Even now, he's doing this voice now, that's a kind of wizened old mans voice. Like a Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf voice. But it is a voice.

The thing about this voice is that, the words and the music if even 30 years old, they resonate completely differently, they take on wisdom and an experience, they become convincing. The voice adds the depth that the songs only hint at.

Exactly, it changes the meaning of the song and that's one of the things he's always looking to do is reinvent the songs for himself, he never listens... I was with Jesse, his

son one day and I was talking about how on 'Love and Theft' he doesn't really play harp and that I had been listening to 'Pledging My Time' on 'Blonde on Blonde' and he does this avant-garde, Miles Davis sort of harp solo, and how brilliant that was. And Jesse says, "From the day he walked out of that recording studio for 'Blonde on Blonde', he has never listened to that record again". And that's the way he is you know, he needs to keep it fresh, keep it looking forward, don't look back. He needs to be constantly reinventing it; he can't get sucked into the nostalgia of it. This is the curse of Bob Dylan in a sense, in that he can't really enjoy his music like we do, he has to be continually be reinventing it and that's an interesting dilemma for him.

Dylan can do something amazing on guitar, harmonica, or be it his vocal style and then a year later, or a month later, or a week later he does something else completely different which ruins what happened previously and people will say, "Dylan cant play guitar, he cant sing", but sometimes he can play guitar beautifully and he can sing beautifully, it depends on how you catch the moment and what he's doing.

And I think he's – as I was saying before – the whole thing about being misunderstood: He's played the good guitar, he's sung the songs nicely already, he's done that. If you look at 'Dont Look Back', you see him just standing on stage, him and a guitar, he's amazing, he can play that guitar, he can play that harmonica, he can sing the songs, hit the notes, he's done that now, he's looking to explore what would happen if he risks going almost off, if he risks almost getting to the edge of the expectable version of the song. What will happen, he's curious about that process and he's willing to risk it. And of course the audience, who loves him, is willing to go there with him you know. And cynical people who aren't willing to go there are gonna look at it cynically and he's learned to live with that.

Well, what you said about Miles Davis totally applies, and Joni Mitchell has said that Dylan and herself as well as Miles, are pioneers, the willingness to experiment, to change the boundaries of what it is your working within, or outside of even.

Well this is why in my opinion – look I respect deeply Paul McCartney and The Rolling Stones – but they have essentially become nostalgia acts and Bob is not a nostalgia act, he is still a vital artist, recreating and creating new work all the time, night by night, and that's one of the reasons now, over the last few years especially with this band he had, he became a great concert draw, again because I think he was inspired by groups like The Grateful Dead to come out every night and reinvent the show. So you never knew from night to night what you were gonna get.

Well this band was very important. Charlie Sexton in particular seems to work on a deeply emotional level. So he would feel the song, feel the emotion and then transcribe it, whereas Larry has all the riffs, all the clichés and all the genres and he pumps them through. He has the scientific side and then you have Charlie Sexton weaving within that. And then on the other side you have Dylan who's on a completely different level again, totally trying to subvert it, each time.

Well watch Charlie, watch Bob during the movie and you see... Charlie really was... played a really crucial role in channelling Bob for the rest of the band and kind of waiting on Bob to see where Bob was going and then he would then almost musically explain to the band and then the band was kinda able to follow along. Charlie was a

really important conduit in the band as well; because he is such an intuitive musician, that he was able to join with Bob and then he was able to also communicate that musically to the band. Tony has that also, Tony also in his way is doing the same thing.

A lot of musicians such as McCartney have to a certain extent sold out, or stay with the same mould and that's the great thing with Bob, he doesn't.

Well I mean look, The Rolling Stones and Paul McCartney, certainly have amazing songs and it is great to hear Paul McCartney can still sing the songs like he did in 1964, it's amazing and my hats off to him and The Rolling Stones too. I saw them recently, here in L.A. and they sounded great but they are basically recreating the records at this point and they're not really stretching, I'd rather Paul McCartney do ten less songs and stretch... I had the same experience with John Fogarty, I went see John Fogarty about two years ago and I love John Fogarty and I'd never seen him live. He came out, he did every Creedance Clearwater song exactly as it was on the record and he did them perfectly, but when it was over you never felt you needed to see him again.

Paul Simon is very similar in that aspect.

Yes exactly, you don't feel you're... You feel like your getting a pre-packaged event. That if you went back next year you'd get the same thing, instead of next year maybe he'll do a whole different set of songs, a whole different way, which is what Bob offers you. And I think that its hard for these massive acts to sort of do what Bob does, which is, really experiment and really extend his range, it's a scary thing, a very risky thing.

Now Bob's out of the constant media scrutiny he's able to experiment without worrying.

Yes and have this fervent following that is willing to be there with him and be part of that with him.

Paul Simon as a live performer is very polished and in a way his style of live performance to a certain extent represents modern culture. The whole idea of consumerist culture. And the movie highlights the ridiculousness of modern culture.

Well even the idea of the protest songs that they want him to sing, we made that list, it's the irony that these protest songs are owned by large corporations, you know, how much impact can they have? The counter culture has been co-oped. So here are these great songs, these great protest songs but they're owned by the media conglomerates who use them to make money and there's kind of a bitter irony to that. I think that we're exploring there.

The film is so funny. The scene in the bar when Luke is speaking to Fred Ward and there's a line in there.

"If you want the world to be round its round, if you want the world to be flat its flat"... "Who's presiding over this slaughter house, me or you?"

Yes there's that and when the guy replies with "I know some things too!"

Yeah, yeah, and then Luke says, "The more you know, the more you'll suffer".

Which is like a mantra really, “The more you know the more you’ll suffer”, that almost explains Bob’s psyche to a large degree, he knows so much, you know, that it’s a burden to be him on a lot of levels.

That whole period from ‘Time Out Of Mind’ to the film interestingly deals with the whole essence of time; in fact time with Dylan is something that I believe hasn’t been studied enough. One of the lines Dylan says is “We try to kill time, but in the end time ends up killing us”.

Yeah well and that’s Bob, you see him exploring that theme in ‘Time Out Of Mind’ and ‘Love and Theft’ and this movie. And you see that in contrast to ‘Dont Look Back’ or ‘Highway 61’, where mortality is kind of an abstract concept. Here there’s a reality to it, a gravity – no pun intended – to it. And that’s a big difference; you’re seeing his thoughts through that prism.

The experimentation with time is something prevalent especially in ‘Time Out Of Mind’ and in particular for me in my favourite Dylan song, ‘Standing in the Doorway’ – it stops time.

Yes, that’s really true. And we talk about time and dreamtime and things like that in the movie too and we’re playing with that idea as well in the movie.

“In my dreams I’m walking through intense heat”.

Yes, and then he said, “I don’t pay any attention to my dreams”. I mean Christian Slater has a line and its been cut down now. There’s a longer version of that scene where Christian Slater says to Chris Penn, “Have you noticed when you dream a dream seems to last many hours, but only lasts a few seconds?” and Chris Penn says, “No not really”. So we’re discussing it and we’re also having fun with it at the same time, we’re playing with those ideas and exploring those ideas.

How do you feel about the scholarly response to the film?

Well I think that whether it be Andrew Motion, or Sean Wilentz or Greil Marcus, I think anybody that’s willing to step back and think about this movie and then enter into it, and dive in and explore it and wander around in it the way Bob sort of does, is gonna be rewarded with a lot of very interesting cross-references and allusions and ideas and themes that you don’t normally see in a movie and so in a lot of ways, you know, like *Art Form* chose it as one of their ten best films. It seems it requires people who are not working as movie critics to have the patience and time to explore the movie.

Yes the critics appear, unwilling to accept it in the long-term.

It was long-term project not meant to have a short lifespan. Like all Bob’s work it will be there, available for people to look at down the line.

Do you have a favourite Dylan song, although that’s probably a difficult question?

Yeah it really is. I was listening to ‘Hard Rain’ as I was coming in today, and I was thinking about ‘Desolation Row’, and I was also, I always loved and wanted to put in the movie, ‘The Groom’s Still Waiting At The Altar’, which is one of my favourites and another favourite of mine is from ‘The Bootleg Series’, and its called ‘Angelina’.

It depends on my mood to a large degree. But those are some of the song I tend to go back to.

The songs that seem to strike you are the epics and they fit into the mould of 'Masked and Anonymous' in many ways.

Yes and that's why I didn't use more of those kinda songs in the movie. It seems superfluous almost to use 'Desolation Row' in this movie. There are a lot of great obscure songs. He has beautiful simple songs – the 'Blood On The Tracks' period – about relationships are so resonate, 'Brownsville Girl'... I love 'Joey'. There's just a whole range. I love... This is a song I wanted him to do and for a long time he was going to do for the movie, was, 'Senor', but we wound up using the Jerry Garcia version, which has a beautiful guitar solo. So I could probably be naming favourite songs forever.

Interesting you mention 'Brownsville Girl', there's supposedly a script for that somewhere.

Well there is one. I believe that Jay Cocks has written a script. I don't know what the status of the film is, but I know that a script does exist and has been floating around and I hope that it gets made.

Are you hoping to experiment further with Bob?

Oh even as we were finishing this movie we started working on a sequel so we have been talking about that for quite some time. Whether we will get a chance to sit down and get to work on it any time soon, I'm not sure. But we talked about that not long before we finished this one... we started talking about the next one. I mean he had a great experience making the movie and I think he'd like to do it again.

Well he's obviously found the right person to do it with.

Well we had a very good collaboration, it was very fruitful I mean the fact that we managed to get this all the way through the system and out there on the movie screen was the miracle really. That's what I tell people.

The promotion for the film perfectly suits it also, not too much and not too little and also going on tour with the film and talking about it is also a great help.

Yes exactly. Yeah it helps contextualise it for people too, which I've been happy to do.

Of course most Dylan fans were bound to like this film but overall I think the response has been warm and receptive.

I think so, I've been very... It's been very moving actually to be at these screenings and have people thank me for making the movie and that's a tremendous personal experience to have and I'm grateful to Bob for giving me that chance.

At Sundance you seemed hesitant and expecting a backlash.

Yeah, but you know, it was even reported that I said, "Aren't there any questions?" and I was even doing that with humour, and but it's reported at a certain angle and it sounds like a totally different experience that it actually was. I mean I actually tell people and I'm quite honest about this, that Sundance was a tremendous experience. At the first screening there was so much expectation and so much backlash and so much controversy. But there were two more screenings that were also just amazing, and the audience responded tremendously to those. But those are not really reported

about and I was there with Luke and a bunch of people and we went to those screenings and I talked at those screenings. Those were a little more intimate and a little less pressure on them and I almost wish we'd started that way, instead of this big centrepiece premiere with all the stars.

Bob showed up on form as usual, complete with woolly hat and a blonde wig.

Yeah, yeah. [laughs] Always masked and anonymous with him, yes.

Dylan's humour is so underplayed. Once when Dylan performed with Joni Mitchell, the press the next day said "Dylan Smiles" as if to point out that he has no sense of humour, but even when he isn't smiling, he actually is. The straight-faced Sundance performance is proof of this.

Right, exactly, exactly. No he was having fun. The making of the movie pleased him. He enjoyed the process, he enjoyed the challenge, he enjoyed the interaction with the other actors, again he found another thing he wanted to understand and he was a quick learner obviously and really observed the lessons quickly and wound up having these amazing experiences with these other great actors.

What was it like between scenes?

Well first of all because I shot on 24p, I also was not even cutting, I was just kinda jumping on the set and making some adjustments and going back in. Maybe my most brilliant directorial touch was saying to Bob right at the beginning, "Listen, we have 20 days to shoot this movie, if you go back to the trailer after each shot, each take, the crew is just not gonna care, but if I get you a comfortable chair and you sit on the set between takes and so as the crew walks by carrying the cables, carrying the ladders, they can go "Hi Bob" and you can nod at them, these people will die for you" and he said "ok". And so he sat on the set throughout the entire movie and never went to his trailer. So everybody who worked on the show was able to have a personal relationship with Bob and so those people then were willing to do whatever had to be done to make this a great movie, every single person on the movie, and he was just available and accessible to them and that worked out great.

The director of 'Hearts of Fire', tried to get a similar approach, because people normally approach Bob in a very weird and strange way and you have to get away from that problem.

Yeah right, well Bob was in a different place for this movie than he was for 'Hearts of Fire'. And I think he was more curious and more open and there was a lot of other great actors hovering around. I mean I would walk onto the set and there would be Bob and Jeff Bridges and Jessica Lange just kinda hanging out and talking and I was like "Wow! I have to do something now". So it was just a great environment to be in, such a heightened environment.

Did he have much advice for the actors?

He would have instinctive advice about movement, he would have certain things in mind in terms of movement or the way a certain lines should be spoken occasionally and he would suggest that very, very occasionally, but normally once around the set he was an actor and did not try to impose his ideas on anybody else.

Bob's acting I think is very natural in one sense and perhaps this is because you said. "Just be".

Yes exactly and that's not easy to do but he was able to do that.

There is still a layer between him and the camera, but the acting is still really great.

There's a certain level of honesty to it that is very powerful and not typical and I think that also threw a lot of people. It's a strange and unsettling performance

really and to most people it comes as a shock, so I think that's why some people had some resistance to it, because again it was kind of like, "Wow this is something I don't really understand", it strips away everything and adds new layers at the same time.

When he's shaving at the mirror in the trailer and Jeff Bridges comes in I think that harks back to 'Renaldo and Clara' in one sense where Renaldo is looking in the mirror. Very similar

Yes, yes, absolutely. And then Jeff is looking in that mirror also and they're both looking back at each other and reflecting on each other, almost like alter egos. A lot of that is almost Bob debating with himself in a sense. The journalist winds up being an interesting shadow figure for Jack Fate and vice versa.

Yes, there's an underlying dialogue between them...

Yes almost like one of them is a ghost in a sense.

Who is it that plays the version of 'Angelina' near the end?

That's a man named Bruce and I wanted to use the actual recording and we couldn't make the instrumental parts work. It didn't seem to work with the words, it got intrusive, so we had him come in and basically do an instrumental version that we were able to use and he did it in a couple of other places in the movie as well. I was very committed with trying to use actual songs from wherever, but there were a couple of places where I just couldn't make it work, we couldn't make the music edit work, so he was able to come in and adapt for the specific space we were talking about.

There's also a part in the movie with a riff that sounds like 'Gotta Serve Somebody' as well.

Yes, that also I think... I had started with a gospel version of 'Gotta Serve Somebody'. I think it might have been Mavis Staples actually. But as the sequences got more polished, I needed that riff and I dunno if we took the riff from the Staples song or whether Bruce did another version of that there. But, there were a couple of places where we were playing with that a lot, to fill in space in certain places and where the actual songs themselves could not be adapted and we would have to go back and create a piece based on that. Also in the hotel room when the young Jack Fate meets up with Angela Basset for the first time, we used a kinda dubbed version of 'Political World' there that was kinda very interesting also, that was really fun to play with.

I thought that reminded me of something.

Very, very far under the surface you'll hear Bob's voice going "Political world, political world", but it's very mixed down.

Have you ever heard 'Farewell Angelina'

I've heard 'Farewell Angelina' too which is also amazing, that was the thing, there was obviously this falling into Ali Baba's cave or something, there's a treasure trove and you don't know where to start sometimes, there's so much great stuff to choose from. I mean even the song on the jukebox in the bar; I experimented with so many different songs before I finally decided on 'He Was a Friend of Mine'.

It almost has a crackly LP feel to it...

Yes, well it is off an LP, it's the old version of the song that he originally did. So again I would just like instinctively put different songs up against certain images and seeing if it felt right... That wound up working great.

Did Bob ever think about recording his rarer songs and using them?

Well I mean he... We recorded so many songs that he recorded a number of older songs and redid them in his way and a lot of that stuff just didn't end up making it into the movie. So there is a quite a bit of Bob music, that is just now in the movie right now. In fact I was just thinking as I said that, there is a rehearsal take of 'All Along The Watchtower'. Its like an 'All Along The Watchtower' jam without a vocal that I didn't find till after I finished the movie. I'd forgotten that he had done it and I thought, "God, that alone is a fantastic kind of instrumental", almost like an Allman Brothers version of 'All Along The Watchtower', that was just great.

I can imagine that being great, because what you tend to see when a spontaneous jam moment happen is – although he's not a conventionally great guitar player – he'll come up with an amazing riff and never go back to it again. He'll do it once and then all of a sudden Larry or Charlie would pick up on that riff.

Exactly, exactly and they can elaborate on it and then suddenly it takes off. And then one of them will start a lead off of that and then it starts to soar.

I can imagine this 'All Along The Watchtower' is like that.

Yeah it's really something. I have to remember to mention this Jeff Rosen, because that's something that should come out at some point it's really quite spectacular....

I think I'm gonna have to get going, I'm enjoying this so much, I could do this all afternoon.

Me too but I know you're a busy guy...

I have to go back to 'Curb Your Enthusiasm', but thank you very much

Well I never thought I'd be able to speak to you as long as this.

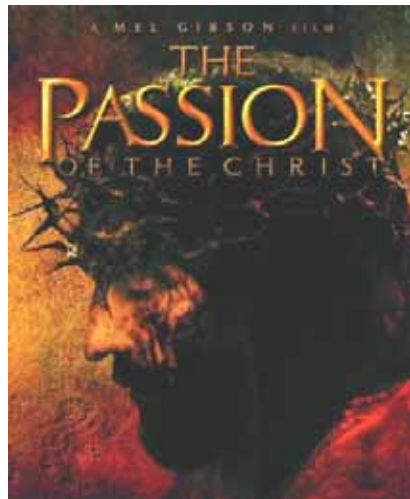
Oh that's my pleasure. I so deeply appreciate what you're doing and deeply appreciate your love for the movie and your devotion to it, I mean its been a great experience talking to you, I can't thank you enough for all your hard work.

The passion of the christ

1095 words about

...a woman on my block...

by Patrick J. Webster



I have always been intrigued by the song ‘License to Kill’; on the one hand I regard it as one of Dylan's least well performed songs, the vocal performance here being almost risible; whilst on the other hand the handling of the female presence in the song must remain one of the most subtle in Dylan’s entire canon.

Mel Gibson’s recent film *The Passion of the Christ*, has some similarities. It was a film that possessed shrewd and adroit tactics in terms of its publicity campaign. One cannot fault it here. In addition it was skillfully photographed, the production values were of sufficiently high standards to provide an almost faultless *mise-en-scene*. It was innovative in its use of language, Aramaic and Latin are used throughout, providing an added sense of verisimilitude.

However, it seems to me the film was superficial in its understanding of cinematic narrative. We all know the story, but it is told with such a lack of dramatic pacing or tension, that it scarcely seems to engage at all. There is little sense of character motive, for

example, why does Caiaphas despise Christ to such an extent? We have no sense of the back-story here, without recourse to the gospel narratives.

The film has been accused of being anti-semitic, and it undoubtedly is, but probably unknowingly so on Gibson's part. The portrayal of the Jews is facile and stereotyped, and, being generous, one would speculate that Gibson was probably unaware of how potentially dangerous such a manipulative and cliched portrayal might prove to be in the current climate.

In the same facile way much of the film is grossly overplayed, again it is cliched and stereotyped. No stone is left unturned (to use a facile cliché) in Gibson's search for the visual icon. For example, Mary holding the dead Christ at the base of the cross - we are obviously made to envisage this as a Pieta - but the image is offered to us in such an overplayed way as to preclude any subtlety or dramatic tension.

Another criticism, a surprising one for Mel Gibson, who would claim to be such a fundamentalist Catholic, is that it is ignorant of scripture. For example, we know Jesus's legs were not broken to fulfil the prophecy, not a bone shall be broken.¹ However, in the film one of the Roman soldiers assisting at the crucifixion breaks Christ's shoulder to stretch his arm out on the cross.

And finally, the film has a violent content, and the violence is displayed in a questionably sadistic fashion. The film has been accused of pandering to repressed sado-masochistic and homoerotic desires - I wouldn't like to comment too much on this - but it would certainly answer some of the questions raised by such an exaggerated depiction of seeing a young, bronzed, muscled body being tortured to death for almost the entire length of a feature film.

However, the film is interesting in its depiction of women. To begin with the devil is portrayed as having a feminine form, which offers a disconcerting and dramatic manoeuvre in a film notably lacking in disconcerting and dramatic manoeuvres. The scene in which we see the devil suckling a deformed child whilst Christ is dying on the cross and *His* mother is mourning his death, is genuinely disturbing.

In addition, the way the film depicts the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalen is of interest, and here the film intertwines with Dylan's great song, 'License to Kill'. The film offers us the two Mary's - one his mother, one his quasi-lover - passively observing Christ's passion. They follow Jesus, from his arrest, through his trial before Pontius Pilate, his scourging, his carrying of the cross to Calvary, his crucifixion and then the deposition. Throughout they are passive and silent, they merely witness the violence and pain they observe.

'License to Kill' offers a similar discourse. It is a trenchant critique of masculine violence and female pacifism. Man (and here the word is not used in a generic sense - it is gender specific toward the masculine) thinks he rules the earth and can do with it what he pleases. This is contradicted by the song's view of woman:

*Now, there's a woman on my block
She just sit there as the night grows still.
She says who gonna take away his license to kill.*

This is similar to the way *The Passion* positions the nature of its female characters; and the comparison is still more pertinent in the way the above chorus changes after the second verse:

*Now, there's a woman on my block
She just sit there facing the hill.
She says who gonna take away his license to kill.*

I don't think it is too speculative an interpretative reading to see the phrase: 'She just sit there facing the hill' as acting as a symbol for Calvary.² Thus the song achieves its power inasmuch as the women are not only depicted as passively watching man despoil the planet - but as the women watching Christ's death. In each case the women have no power to alter what they are witnessing, they must merely observe and deal with the consequences.

Unfortunately, Mel Gibson's film does not possess such a subtle and complex discourse. I see it as a simplistic film, a morally suspect film, a sexually repressed and ambivalent film, and finally, an unknowingly dangerous film. I would not go as far as Christopher Kitchens - who famously regretted being an atheist - inasmuch as there would then not be a hell for Gibson to burn in - but nonetheless I think it is important to perceive of the slick commercialism in operation. This was not an attempt to elevate the Roman Catholic faith, it was an attempt to elevate Gibson's power base in Hollywood - and in that sense it has succeeded.

¹ John 19:36: 'For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken.'

² Note how 'hill' can be seen as fulfilling a similar symbolic role in such songs as: 'It Takes a Lot to Laugh ...' (Well, if I die on top of the hill), 'Idiot Wind' (There's a lone soldier on the cross - changed from an earlier version There's a lone soldier on the hill), 'Shelter from the Storm' (In a little hilltop village they gambled for my clothes), 'Foot of Pride' (I can see him in my mind, crawling up that hill) and so on.



Bob Dylan portrait by A.Fortier

ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE

Do You Trust Bob?

by Michael Crimmins

“I got a sense that he was a kind of character that had stepped out of a Kerouac book, and Kerouac’s sense of a changing landscape, a changing kind of culture, was really interesting to me. That he saw people coming into the main stream culture, off the road, and not out of graduate school, and not out of literature, or of the traditional school that we took our important people.”

D.A Pennebaker talking of his impressions on first meeting and working with Bob Dylan for the 1965 documentary film ‘Dont Look Back’.

This observation came as part of a more recent documentary programme by the BBC in 2001, looking back over the work of filmmakers Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus.

To my mind Pennebaker with those few words managed to place Dylan’s evolution within music and poetry of the time exact. What was viewed by the main stream, as a non academic infiltration, according to Pennebaker’s perception of Kerouac’s changing landscape, was of course what was to become known as the counter culture.

Descriptions of what constitutes main stream or counter culture, if there is such a thing, I am afraid could drive you mad. For instance just look at some of the lyrics that served as pop song before Dylan came along! Still we all know what Pennebaker was driving at so I will stick with that angle for the time being.

Woody Guthrie was the instigator of Dylan's changing landscape. Dylan was Guthrie! Dylan brought forth from 'Bound for Glory' the fictional, as well as the real Guthrie therefore even though Dylan moved away from the Guthrie persona, they are forever intertwined. Neither Guthrie nor Dylan would have been recorded in history in anywhere near approaching the same light, had it not been for the other. In a sense the whole counter culture from the fifties through to the early sixties was waiting for Dylan as Messiah/spokesperson for a generation. Bob Dylan was undoubtedly through his songs and whether he liked it or not, that person.

The Beat poets, that Dylan embraced, such as Allen Ginsberg whose whole ideology, that was to be found within their poetry of preached truth attacks, that became that of the counter culture, were quick to fall in behind Dylan and herald him as their chosen one. Ginsberg in an interview by Jeremy Isaacs (Face to Face) as late as 1995, was still expounding Dylan's stance

"You know the word 'Lyric' comes from 'Lyre' a stringed instrument. Bob Dylan is the perfect lyric poet and maybe the greatest poet of this half of the century, and certainly better known than me, incidentally I'm not the most well known poet, I'd say Bob Dylan is, and he's a respectable poet too..."

Hmm! "and he's a respectable poet too..." that last bit is interesting, nobody in their right mind would have described the likes of Kerouac and Burroughs as respectable a decade or two back! But then again Ginsberg did say this in 1994 the year after Dylan played at the inauguration ceremony for Bill Clinton!

Dylan does seem, especially, and more recently, in the nineties, to have come full circle and to be embracing the main stream. Even if Country Joe McDonald was selling Pepsi on American TV in 1994, it did come as a bit of a shock to hear Dylan's "The Times they are A-changin' " being used in some sort of financial advertising campaign.

The fact that Dylan started to deconstruct himself and the counter culture along with him, though possibly not consciously, and that this process began almost as soon as he first started to gain any sort of recognition, either gives him a special place, with his dogged independence and restlessness, acting as his badge of sincerity, or it leaves him painted as a lesser individual. The manner with which in 1979 Dylan suddenly appeared to throw himself in Christ's direction suggests that the former of those theories be the correct one, and also that the latter be incorrect. Of course you would have to believe, like I, that the artist was indeed sincere in 1979 for that to be any use as a gauge.

Dylan has always been so very hard to define. His product is, speaking for myself, so easy to love, 'Self Portrait' included, and yet barring that period from 79 to 81, I have never really been implicitly sure of his sincerity. Who was it that said something like "Never trust the artist trust the tale"? Well that is the way I feel about Bob Dylan! I have never really been sure! I do trust the tale implicitly. How far can the ventriloquist throw his voice? And how many voices....

“Last thoughts on Woody Guthrie” claimed the artists independence, while the later “It’s Alright Ma, I’m only bleeding” betrayed frustration and resignation. Both of these I consider to come from the pen of integrity. The artist is entitled to another side. Dylan is only after all a human, and as such I realise that he, like the rest of us is capable of contradiction and periods of misjudgement and of course he will be prone to artistic uncertainty, he is also quite entitled to periods of not caring, after all we do not own him! Bob Dylan has given me so much pleasure through his music that I feel that to withhold any negative thoughts in writing about him would only somehow discredit the positive. The recent arrow to the heart, if I’m going to be totally honest and not wear my brave face, was Victoria’s secret. Dare I say that we, the fans, were a bigger and more unsuspecting target than perhaps the last one, the Dylan biographers, who were told in no uncertain terms that they know nothing and should get a life.

“Here is your throat back, thanks for the loan”

I would like to make it clear that I am very grateful to everyone who ever wrote anything on the subject of Bob Dylan and his art. Make no mistake either, Dylan was as glad as you or I to see ‘Bob Dylan: An Intimate Biography’ by Anthony Scaduto hit the shelves back in 1971. “I like your book .That’s the weird thing about it”. We all know that he actively encouraged both Scaduto and Robert Shelton in their endeavours.

The music that Dylan has created over the years has, in most part, been sensational. So I have no complaints there. That same music though was so influential that it did shape the way we think, and as David Bowie so eloquently put it in his ‘Song for Bob Dylan’ “You sat behind a million pair of eyes and told them how they saw”

While not wanting to accuse Bob of being a doctrinaire, surely there has to be a little responsibility for influential writing of any kind, though on the other hand one could say, any was excused in songs such as “My Back Pages”.

It is songs such as “It’s Alright Ma, I’m only bleeding” with lines like “Advertising signs that con you into thinking that you’re the one...” that make Victoria’s secret hard to take – come on! this IS Bob Dylan! Do we have to pretend that we ever expected Flesh coloured Christ’s from the man that ended that same song with

“And if my thought dreams could be seen they’d probably put my head in a guillotine”?

Well maybe not. Not that is, until the song, “Trust Yourself” from Dylan’s 1985 album ‘Empire Burlesque’. Beside this song that ironically purports to deal with truth, we first had to get past, in more ways than one, Bob Dylan coyly posing on the cover in a modern romantic jacket!!! It was a disappointing album to say the least, with a disappointing sound that had nothing to do with the Bob Dylan of even five years before. Dylan would be hard pressed to deny that he was chasing a contemporary sound and look. Though middle of the road mediocrity is no crime this is the point from whence my mistrust stems. Even if the song “Trust Yourself” only seemingly reneges on the philosophy of “Gotta Serve Somebody” I’m sure that Dylan would have been fully aware of it.

“Well you’re on your own. You always were, in a land of wolves and thieves.

Don't put your hope in ungodly man or be a slave to what somebody else believes"

It's not that it harks back to 'don't follow leaders' that bothers me, it's that the 'ungodly man' line seemingly chickens out of the 'your on your own' theme. On 'Empire Burlesque' Dylan is back down to earth with a thump. He once more feels the weight of his own pen. If 'Infidels' was confusing, well it was for me, at least 'Empire Burlesque' is human, in as much that Dylan deals with all the old demons and temptations that he had to deal with before his Christian conversion. He expresses normality. The best song on this album to my mind is "I'll Remember You" and it is the exact opposite while being closely related to "Trust Yourself". This song has warmth and compassion. Although I don't feel it to be a love song with the usual connubial connotation. Dylan speaks plainly enough here of the one he has tried to love.

Didn't I, didn't I try to love you?
Didn't I, didn't I try to care?
Didn't I sleep, didn't I weep beside you
with the rain blowing in your hair?

With "Trust Yourself" Dylan deals his short comings, he's cold and uncomfortable and it cuts through. Dylan directly asks us not to trust him, it is also a little disconcerting, after 'Slow Train Coming' and 'Saved', that he tells us not to be a slave to what somebody else believes! The saving grace is though, and it's taken me a while to get to this, that by revealing his weakness and placing himself in a cold light and among the vain people that he sings of, he actually is being as honest as he can be! It looks like, after going round the houses, as we say up north, that I do trust Bob Dylan after all! Do you?

There are some good songs on 'Empire Burlesque' but the horrible production rendered by Dylan himself and remix specialist Arthur Baker make them hard to get at.

Sometimes contradiction can be the result of too much thought, too much theorising. Dylan came close to this in my book with songs like "Trust Yourself" and I realise that I have come more than close in this article! Still it is just me exorcising my own doubts, my own demons-and you don't mind do you?

SUMMER IS A CUMMIN IN

BY RICHARD LEWIS

In Peter Robinson's novel "The Summer That Never Was" his protagonist Inspector Banks is involved with some of his boyhood friends. At one point he is remembering how you associate certain music with certain years and in 1965 it was "Help!" and "Bringing It All Back Home". Banks had The Beatles and his friend Steve had Bob Dylan.

Steve Hill had some rather way-out tastes in music. Other kids might like Sandie Shaw, Cliff Richard and Cilia Black, but for Steve it was the Animals, the Who and Bob Dylan.

That day, songs like 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' and 'Maggie's Farm' transported Banks to places he didn't know existed, and mysterious love songs, 'Love Minus Zero/No Limit' and 'She Belongs To Me', lingered with him for days. Though Banks had to admit he didn't understand a word Dylan was singing about, there was something magical about the songs, even vaguely frightening, like a beautiful dream in which someone starts speaking gibberish. But perhaps that was hindsight. He didn't become a fully fledged Dylan fan until 'Like A Rolling Stone' knocked him for six a month or two later, and he wouldn't claim, even today, to know what Dylan was singing about half the time.

In 1965 I was fortunate enough to see Bob Dylan at the Royal Albert Hall in London. I went to both shows and if I close my eyes I can picture exactly where I was sitting on May 9th and 10th. To confuse matters the show on the 10th was actually the original show and the one on the 9th was an extra show put on when the 10th sold out so quickly. I queued up overnight outside the RAH Box Office and was lucky enough to get 4 tickets in the fourth row at the front and to the right of centre stage. They cost £1 each or as it was known then 20 shillings. For the extra concert on the 9th I got tickets in the balcony for 10 shillings and sixpence as by then I was nearly broke.

By then I was already reading and collecting anything I could about Dylan. In the UK that meant buying Melody Maker, New Musical Express, Record Mirror, Disc and Music Echo as well as checking out the daily newspapers. Up to that time there had not been much Dylan coverage but that all changed in 65 when as Chris said "The Circus Is In Town".

All this came back to me as I listened to "Live '64". A number of reviewers of this CD have mentioned how it was somewhat of a transition for Dylan as he was now writing songs that were completely different to anything that we had heard before. For the majority of the audience this was the first time that they had heard "Gates of Eden", "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" or "Mr Tambourine Man" (as well as "If You Gotta Go, Go Now") as they did not appear on record until "Bringing It All Back Home" was released in the US in March of 1965. It would be another two months before we in the UK got to hear it.

In the weeks before Dylan arrived in the UK on April 26th he was getting regular front page coverage in the Melody Maker. On the radio we were starting to hear "Subterranean Homesick Blues" which was released over here as a single backed with "She Belongs To

Me” the very week that Dylan arrived. It entered the MM charts at 31 on May 1st and climbed as high as 9 three weeks later. That same week on May 1st the MM album chart had “Freewheelin” at 3 and “The Times They Are A Changin” at 5. Dylan's short English tour lasted from Sheffield on April 30th to London on May 10th taking in Liverpool, Leicester, Birmingham, Newcastle and Manchester. During that time the only “new” song that audiences could have recognised was “She Belongs To Me” if they had bought the single as the album “Bringing It All Back Home” was not yet released here.

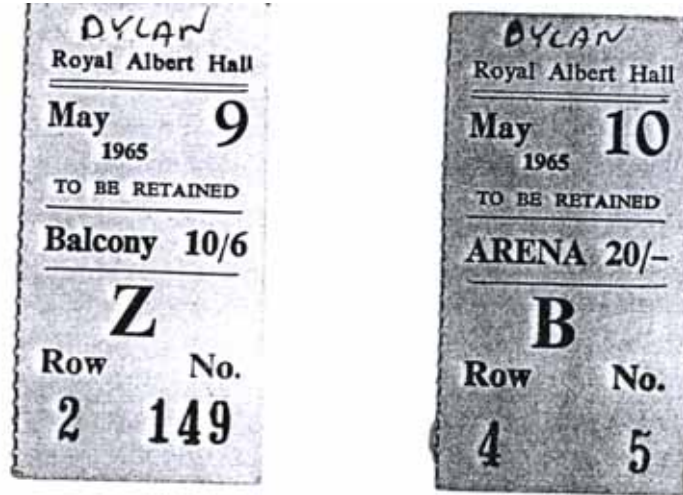
A CBS ad for the single in MM on May 8th refers and shows covers of just Dylan’s first four albums with no mention of “Bringing It All Back Home”. It is eventually released on Dylan’s 24th birthday and goes straight into the MM album chart at 10 on May 29th with “Freewheelin” at 2 and “Times” at 6. The following week (June 5th) it rises to 5 as “Freewheelin” reaches number 1 and on the 12th it replaces “Freewheelin” as the top selling album.

So there you are in a hushed concert hall in 65 in whichever city you can get to and you greet the opening “The Times They Are A-Changin” with rapturous applause quickly followed by a beautiful “To Ramona”. Then something strange happens as one after the other you hear 5 brand new songs! These are the same 4 that US audiences heard as on “Live 64” with the addition of “Love Minus Zero / No Limit”. No wonder that both you and Dylan need an interval. It is hard to imagine now how it felt hearing those new songs as they were so different from what had gone before or what we were used to or expected. Small wonder that reviewers and commentators talked about a revered hush in the hall. We weren’t just quiet we were gob smacked, awestruck, and amazed!

The extra London concert being on the day before worked out well for me as on the 9th I was up in the balcony hearing the wonderful new songs for the first time. The next day I was really near in the fourth row and as it became clear we were going to hear the exact same set list again it was possible to concentrate not only on the words but also on Dylan himself. I also managed to get out my Brownie Box camera and get four photos of Bob in action although one turned out to be his back as he turned to that part of the audience who were actually seated *behind* him below the grand organ!

Contrary to what some have suggested, with the benefit of hindsight, Dylan was not bored but having a great time. Having already introduced “Gates of Eden” it was wonderful to see his sly grin as he finished “If You Gotta Go, Go Now” and said *that* was called “Gates of Eden”. He did make a few changes in “Talking World War Three Blues” and of course the reason we all clap like mad for “Don't Think Twice” and then “With God On Our Side” is simply that at last there are songs we recognise. There are still two more new songs in “She Belongs To Me” and the closing “It’s All Over Now Baby Blue”.

Richard's tickets

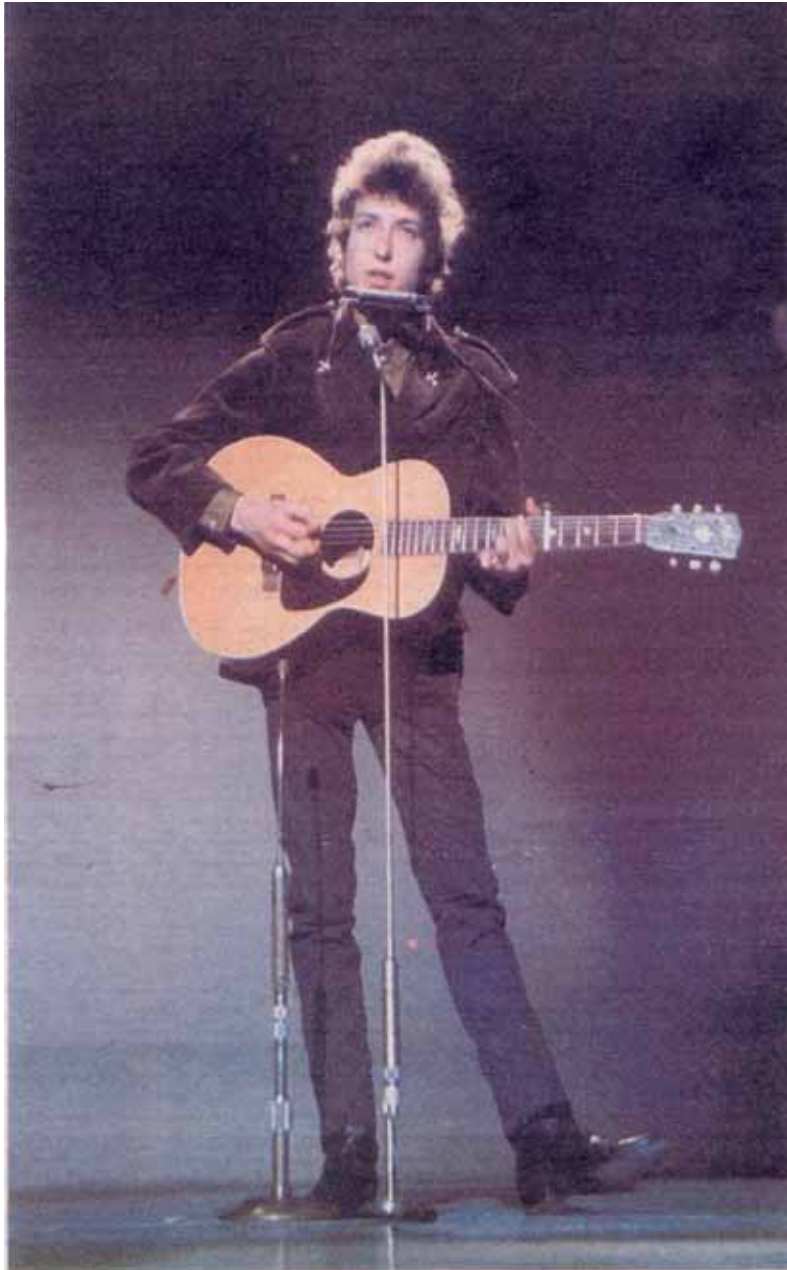


Richard's photos



Richard's paper





BOB DYLAN has achieved more fame as a songwriter than a singer. Remember when his composition "Blowin' In The Wind" was a big hit for Peter, Paul and Mary? That's one Dylan song nobody sings nowadays. Other stars who have achieved success with Bob's songs include the Byrds, Johnny Cash and Solomon Burke. The Ian Campbell Folk Four also gave Bob a run for his money with "The Times They Are A' Changin'." Here's a nice colour picture of Bob — singing, not writing songs. . . .

Whether you listen to 'Live 64' or one of your bootlegs, you are still hearing a glimpse of what was about to come.

GOLDEN YEARS (Run For The Shadows)

by Mark Carter

The most exciting thing about reading this month's issue of Mojo was probably the advert for the next issue, which promises an exhaustive overlook of Dylan's activities in 1978 ("The year he mourned Elvis Presley.. .met Sid Vicious.. .found God!"). There, amongst the blurb, was a lovely picture of Bob circa very early 1978 in leather jacket and big floppy felt hat. Ahhh.....the memories that photo brought back.....

See, 1978 was the year I discovered Bob. Anyone who's been reading Freewheelin these past few years may well recall my cartoon history and, if they do, they may well remember that 1978 was probably the pivotal year for me, music wise. Not only did I emerge blinking from the fallout of my earlier Glam Rock inauguration hungry for the Next Big Thing (and the Next Big Things in early 1978 - for me - would have to have included Kate Bush, Blondie and Punk, to name but three) (and Meat Loaf, to name yet another three), but I suddenly had the money to buy records on a more regular basis than at any time before. Amidst all of this came Bob Dylan, wafting in through the airwaves like an early summer breeze and gracing the cover of every newspaper and magazine from the Daily Mirror and the NME through to Reader's Digest and Angler's Monthly. I heard Baby Stop Crying, I bought Street Legal and that was it -I was hooked. Of course, I didn't know it at the time - it would be a good two years before I did (probably when I realised that I was one of only about two dozen or so people in the whole of the UK who had any interest in buying Saved) and by then it was too late.

So 1978 has always kind of been "my" Dylan and, for ages, Street Legal contained what I considered to be the "Dylan sound". So convinced of this was I (sorry, I seemed to have turned into Yoda there for a minute), that, despite at least owning More Greatest Hits, Desire and a couple of others by August 1979, I was still positive that Slow Train Coming was going to sound exactly like Street Legal musically, with just a little more emphasis on God and Jesus. Of course, prior to this, the Budokan album came out and emphasised the "Dylan sound", recasting all of his old classics as though they had been written for Street Legal and presenting Bob as The Entertainer; slick, friendly and happy to please the crowd - not something you could accuse him of either side of 1978.

Twelve months after discovering him, everything had changed and the media's love affair with him (so rekindled during that wonderful long summer of 1978) was over. To all intents and purposes he was on a downward spiral, as far as the media and the general public were concerned, that he would not really pull out of until he nearly bought the farm during early 1997. I think I said this in Freewheelin once before but no one will remember so I'll repeat it here; I don't think that 1979 Bob Dylan would have snagged me the way

that the 1978 version did, even if hindsight has proven Slow Train Coming and the Gospel tour to be close to the best of his work. There was something in the air during those magical twelve months, I really believe that.

Perhaps that's why I've always been surprised (and not a little disappointed) when the 1978 tour always appears way down the list whenever these "Best Tour" polls are conducted and how it's usually referred to in such disparaging terms whenever Bob's touring years are discussed. It seems to me that what made hundreds of thousands of people deliriously happy back then now amazes or embarrasses them when they recall how deliriously happy they were. Nowadays, the common opinion is that Bob was just a bit too showbizzy onstage, a bit too bland and Las Vegas cabaret. The band were too big, the musicianship of a few members somewhat questionable. Bob was coasting, forced to play Japan and European airfields because he needed the money to pay the bills, adrift between more important periods (Rolling Thunder/Renaldo And Clara one end, getting Born Again the other). Bob had seen Neil Diamond in concert during 1977 and suddenly decided that he wanted to be him. These things may be true, though I personally don't think they are, but it doesn't explain why, say, the 1978 arrangement of All I Really Wanna Do was considered cheeky and amusing in 1978 but is considered tacky and false in 2004.

I happen to think that the 1978 tour was a fine tour, despite - or because of, who knows? - the fact that I didn't go. I'd suggest that, with the exception of the 1984 tour, that was the last time you heard a live version of Tangled Up In Blue that was worth hearing. Sure, it was a Greatest Hits tour, just like - as I discussed in these pages a few months ago - many of his tours since have been. But, if he was doing it purely for the money and if his heart was supposedly not really in it and it was all a bit soulless, why did he take the trouble of revamping all of those classics? Why work on them and rehearse and rehearse and rehearse (as we know he did 'cos we've got the tapes) when he could have simply knocked off punter-friendly versions that sounded like the originals in less than half the time that would have pleased the crowds and the promoters just as much?

It's also one of the few Bob tours where it's essential to get a selection of shows from beginning, middle and end, simply to see how the revamped arrangements continued to revamp themselves onstage night after night and how Bob's voice went from being refreshed in February after it's 20-month break from the road, to peaking in Europe during June and how it really did sound as though he had been gargling with paint stripper during the November/December American dates. Compare, for instance Mr. Tambourine Man in Japan, Europe and then at the latter US dates (the Nashville video footage is a good example) or the changes wrought on Tangled Up In Blue, not just lyrically but emotionally too.

It's also one of the last Bob tours where, by and large, he looked pretty good (o-kay, he may have overindulged on the old eyeliner a tad and the lightning-stripe flares may have been a bit over the top) and he would not look that good again until the 1984 Letterman show and, I would suggest, after the 1984 UK shows - where he brought the man in the long black coat to life five years before he actually wrote about him - he would never quite look that good ever again. Let's face it; the day when he decided that the 10-gallon Stetson was an essential piece of stage wear was the day when his onstage presence and charisma dissolved by at least 50%.

As for those who would file Street Legal below - for instance - New Morning, Oh Mercy, Slow Train Coming, even Time Out Of Mind, well, I can only say that I'm amazed. It's a great album, both musically and lyrically - and you can't even moan about the muddy production since 1999, when the remastered CD shunted the girls to the back of the mix, made the drums sound like drums instead of baked bean tins (empty ones, at that) and generally cleaned up the sound so that Bob's vocals were no longer competing against the sax and both - voice importantly - were suddenly crystal-clear. Again, the album seems to be considered nowadays as a kind of stopgap; a work that falls between the twinned excellence of Blood On The Tracks and Desire and the fire-and-brimstone that was waiting up the road. The same fire-and-brimstone that some have detected beginning to smoulder on some of the Street Legal numbers. Perhaps it's there and perhaps it isn't. Personally, I've never heard it and I don't believe that Bob put it there but hindsight is a wonderful thing and some experts believe that Bob's years of hell and damnation started there, on the songs that he wrote during the aftermath of an unpleasant divorce in 1977. Well, maybe he was just feeling a bit pissed off at that particular time. You would be too, wouldn't you? Whatever, it's a wonderful album; easily up there in my Top Ten and probably even nudging into the Top Five without too much trouble. It's even got the best album sleeve he would issue until 1993's World Gone Wrong, and even that sleeve can't hold a candle to Street Legal.

If, then, 1978 was "my Bob" and Street Legal "my Bob album", that may explain some of my prejudice, but I firmly believe that both need to be re-evaluated by the Dylan community. I would still rather revisit Dylan in 1975 more than any other year but - and here's where I blow my little remaining credibility completely - after that, I would elect to revisit 1978 before, say, 1966. There; I said it.

Besides, it'd be nice to see myself again 26 years ago, if only to warn myself not to buy ELP's Love Beach album.



Like Furniture

by **Chris Cooper**

Hi folks,

First a hearty welcome to our new members, hope your stay is long, productive and enjoyable. Fw is something of an institution these days. I confess that at times writing can be arduous but at other times I find it a way of exorcising the various demons and concerns that sometimes seem to creep up on me.

Its that kind of time now I am afraid.

As I get ready for yet another Dylan UK Tour, I start to get the usual pangs of guilt about leaving the long suffering Dizzy behind. Now before I go further let me just point out that I always give her the chance to tag along, but she doesn't have the desire to do that often these days. That is not to say that she isn't interested in music, far from it. But her interests lie in other directions. So, whilst in this slightly vulnerable mood it's pretty easy for her to get me to go to gigs that she wants to do. Only fair after all. The thing is though, that right now the "nostalgia" wagon is really running and there are quite a few shows for her to go to. In this month alone there are some classical things locally. Plus Edgar Winter, Alvin Lee, The Yardbirds and Spencer Davis. With John Mayall and Chicken Shack heading over the horizon it's a buy and expensive time. Also this month we went to see Ian Hunter, Hawkwind (OK, lets own up that's more mine than hers) and Gillian Welch soon also, not to mention our own Cambridge Bob Dylan day and the Folk Festival, the money can stretch pretty thin.

No I am not about to ask for donations.

But you get the picture.

Now this is an equally testing time for other reasons. Believe it or not, I'll be 55 soon, which in Health Service terms means I can retire from full time employment. I have mixed feelings about that, some days can't wait.

Sometimes unsure if it's a good idea. You see I am luckier than some in that I have always loved my work. But lately the health service is a bit less loving of me than I of it. The Hospital that I am the Manager of is currently a considered victim of PCT cuts, and may be closed to balance the books. This is

particularly galling as we have just undergone an audit that placed us sixth in the UK scoring! I can see my team starting to disintegrate because of the uncertainty, and there seems to be little I can do. At the same time they know that I am eligible to retire soon, and yes that makes me feel a little guilty. Though to be honest the idea of starting a new post elsewhere completely from scratch is pretty unattractive also. But the health service is a slow and ponderous beast, so whilst I know I can retire, and get a reasonably respectable pension, I don't know exactly what that is yet. Put that lot in a pot and stir it up and you get some idea of where I am. Confused ? I imagine how I feel then!

So I currently find these old guys up there strutting their stuff a little harder than usual to take. Most recently it is the Yardbirds. We are seeing them a number of times, they are/were one of Dizzy's favourite bands, added to which she knows two of the band, Jim McCarty and Chris Dreja quite well and we often get invites so tickets are cheap, or even free. Yardbird gigs are off affairs nowadays. The average age of the audience is 50-65 I would guess. (so is the band!) I sat in the Cresset at Peterboro the other night watching them, and I started paying more attention to the crowd than to them. I suddenly realized, as they plowed thru another version of "Over Under Sideways Down" that the crowd were all sitting perfectly still. There was no hand clapping, no foottapping, no head shaking, nothing. People seemed completely content to just sit there and watch. It was an off parody. I had to think about the frenzies that I go thru at Dylan shows, where Bob, and his audience are certainly of similar age. This lot were just stationary! To quote the man they were standing around (well ok sitting actually) like furniture ! What made it look all the more peculiar was that after the show the Yardbirds go to the Foyer where they sign record sleeves etc. NOW here the crowd come to life, they gush all over them and snap up the few discs that are on sale also. It was like watching two different groups of people. I had to see if I was imagining this so when I saw Spencer Davis I looked for the same malaise and indeed it was there !!! The reaction was virtually the same as for the Yardbirds.

So what am I say ??? "Hope I do before I get old" hell no. I just don't want us to end up like that. It just seemed a complete parody of the entire event. Maybe I am reacting that way because of my own indecisive future. Maybe I am just reacting about retirement, after all it's a milestone event and one that draws a curtain over a major part of ones life. (not I might add that I would not be working at all, it has always been my intention to do a couple of days a

week to boost the funds, don't you know) But to get that empty, that hollow that you go along to see a piece of your past, then sit there like some detached spectator whilst your past plays before you. God I hope I never get THAT old!

In two weeks time I start off in Cardiff and run thru till the Barrowlands show in Glasgow. And I can honestly say that I am looking forward to it, and I can also say that I will not sit there and just observe. I will try, in my own limited way to be a part of it all, and to revel again in the knowledge that I am sharing the same air as Mr Dylan. An whether or not I can do the whole tour in the future, well we will see. But if it ever got that detached I would not go again, ever.

Now that's off my chest I can say again to our new guys, I hope it gets you like that. An if Fw is ever a chore then it's time to leave, because life is too short for that amount of detachment. An Fw is too organic for that kind of participation.

Good luck to you all

An if we meet along the road in the next few months, say hello.

Till Next Time

Bits and Bobs

by Paula Radice



Afraid this is going to be very disjointed this month: lots of little things to discuss, but nothing that ties together coherently!

1. I am now (officially) very old.

Had my 40th birthday last week (I know a lady never reveals her age, but it's OK because I've never considered myself a lady. "Ladies", as far as I'm aware and as my mother frequently mentions, don't wear Bob Dylan t-shirts). I had a really great birthday at school, which involved, among other things, members of staff pretending that a large box delivered me in the staff room contained Mr. Dylan. Alas- it didn't, so my fantasy of Bob jumping out wearing nothing but a cheeky little number from Victoria's Secret went unfulfilled.

I am now going to embrace middle age with gusto by a) becoming even more of an eccentric cat-owning single woman and b) no longer hiding the fact that going to a garden centre on a Sunday is actually good fun. I still intend, however, behaving in a very juvenile fashion in Hibbing in August.

2. I am now (almost) a radio star.

I know that there are those among the *Freewheelin'* membership - ie. CP! - for whom TV and radio appearances are twice-daily and very humdrum activities, but I have just had my first- ever radio interview, for a Radio 4 programme coming out soon about "*Like a Rolling Stone*". I don't know who else has been approached; I certainly enjoyed it, though I was very nervous at the time. I also had a very heavy cold that week, so when the programme is aired I will be immediately noticeable as the contributor who sounds like the creature from the black lagoon. Moreover, I have very little memory of what I actually said, so it may all have been complete nonsense...

3. *The books pile up...*

I have been trying not to buy many books in the last few months (because I've been saving up for the Great Minnesota Adventure), but I have now succumbed and bought in one fell swoop all the books I've missed recently. I'll review the English-language ones next month (ie. Al Aronowitz' *Bob Dylan and the Beatles*; David Boucher's *Dylan & Cohen. Poets of Rock and Roll*; and Glen Dundas' fantastic new labour of love, *Tangled*). Recent foreign-language publications include: *Bob Dylan. En Vei Til Din Dør* by Kjell Ivar Sandvik (which is Norwegian) and the French *Bob Dylan, Épitaphes 11* by Stéphane Koechlin. If you're interested, the former is available from www.bokkilden.no, and the latter from www.amazon.fr. But you're probably much more sensible than I am, and don't buy books in languages you can't actually read...

4. *Six more weeks of school...*

Only half a term to go until the end of my two-year stint with my current class. I shall have very mixed feelings about letting them go, because it's been lovely being with them and seeing the progress they've made since the beginning of Year 3. And they've just done really well on their end-of-year tests, making me very proud of them. All of them can now recognise a photo of Bob Dylan from 50 paces (although as yet this skill doesn't feature in the national SATs tests) and they now know when to groan in unison at my jokes; important skills.

5. *The Bob concerts*

I hope that everyone enjoys the concerts when Bob comes over. I'm not going to any this time round, partly because I can't (the ones which are mid-week) and partly because the ones I can get to I just don't want to go to (ie. the *Fleadh*: I did go the last time round, ten years ago, and it put me off events of that scale for life. Standing in a field for ten hours with thousands of men who have been drinking Guinness all day isn't my idea of fun, surprisingly enough). I thought about it hard, and decided that it really wouldn't do to spoil the fantastic memories of the last three London shows: even if I could get to the arenas, I don't think I would this time. Shepherds' Bush, Hammersmith and Brixton cast a formidable shadow!

Be happy

Last Thoughts on Bob Dylan

It's alright ma, I'm only dying ho ho ho

By Bob Fletcher

Last night listening to Dylan, aided by a combination of Mother Nature's finest audio enhancement and German lager, I decided that this article would consist entirely of comments made by members of the public during audience recordings. This morning it didn't seem such a good idea. Admittedly, American audiences seem to transcend everyday observations ("I just want to move her hand.....but she has a better angle" – Louisiana April 12 1993) whilst Europeans tend to err on the side of mundane ("Go on Bobby..." – Birmingham NEC 2002). However, with no obvious assistance from a website and a disabling lack of motivation, I felt unable to continue with any meaningful research. The other problem was that this morning the notes I made last night made no sense at all. In order to compensate I thought about the dream I had. Someone wanted to pay me lots of money. All I had to do was spend the afternoon, in a luxury hotel, with several models dressed only in their underwear.....

I digress.

There is an old bit of philosophy that says you have to master four ways of looking at things: as they were, as they are, as they might become, as they ought to be. And then you devote your life to whichever of those you want. Bob Dylan has lived long enough to understand. In fact, he has turned such philosophy into an art form. Listen to 'Good As I Been To You' and 'World Gone Wrong' and you find that they are perfect companions to 'Time Out Of Mind'. (It is with a terrible sense of shame that I now admit to not being over impressed when I first heard the entire album. I have since taken Andy Gill's advice – Mojo, November 2000 - and bought a pair of cartoon ass's ears).

Around the time the former were released an article appeared in The Guardian (13th February, 1992). The author observes Dylan "staring idly at the paperback book that someone has brought aboard his tour bus." The book is, of course, about Dylan. On handing back the book Dylan is quoted thus; "Naw, I've already been all those places and done all those things.....Now if you ever find a book out there that's going to tell me where I'm going, I might be interested". Five years later the latter appeared and Not Dark Yet reduced me to tears.

Two years ago I began, in earnest, to think about my own mortality. I am surrounded by death. I work for a Drug and Alcohol Service and have become accustomed to overdoses, accidents, and self-destruction. I cope. As Hank Williams reportedly said: "Every time I close my eyes I see Jesus coming down the road....I've things to straighten out with the man".

Like many of you I have experienced the loss of family. Both my grandparents are dead and my parents deal with a series of illnesses on a daily basis. On several occasions I have accepted that I may not see them alive again and have prepared for their funerals.

Recently I have spent ever-increasing amounts of time waiting for the news of Bob Dylan's death. Every time I turn on the radio I prepare mentally. And I panic that I may miss the announcement so I buy the Guardian the next day just to check. The obituaries are there, minus Dylan, and another day passes. Which means it gets closer. As with many of Dylan's lyrics, I find it too much (sometimes too painful) to comprehend.

By its very nature death defies definition. Bob Dylan has, like all of us, been fixated by the end times. Throughout the sixties his songs, poems, and performances were filled with references. We just had to want to listen. (Strangely, BobDylan.com only lists 28 songs containing the word death. I can only assume that this refers to songs that are subject to copywrite. Admittedly I didn't try variations such as 'die'. A wider search of Google using Bob Dylan and Death provides 893,000 sites. More of which later). Dylan has the ability to see the ambulance before most of us realise there is going to be a collision. He has met with Death before, both personally and in the guise of his muse. However, his experience cannot be the same as mine as we are not each other. Likewise, the feelings associated with Dylan's death will be mine only.

I will read the obituaries but they will have limited meaning because I didn't write them. I will experience that "fierce or violent sorrow" which Burton (in his Anatomy of Melancholy) refers to as "the epitome, symptom, and chief cause of melancholy". I will seek out those who understand my pain, those who can express empathy. I encourage you to do the same. Rage at the loss and be angry with Dylan for leaving you. But try and remember that none of us has tomorrow by right.

No time to choose when the truth must die,
No time to lose or say goodbye.
(Street Legal)

Denial is a perfectly normal part of the grieving process. So is isolation. Therefore, I will continue, alone, to listen on a daily basis, at times blissfully unaware that I will never see him again. Though we were never friends I will search for the 'lost' Dylan. Stephen Walsh, in his book Heartbreak Spoken Here (a hugely enjoyable journey through Country and Western music) notes "beyond that, as a pattern to things develops and the adrenalin that change has created disperses, comes a period of pain and isolation which is difficult to endure. Part of it is a simple loneliness, a longing. Part of it is a fearful wonder about where and what one is and where one is going."

I will identify with a communal sense of bereavement whilst distancing myself from any public outpouring. If God is in his heaven, Dylan's resting place will remain unknown. The Devil already has Robert Johnson's and Purgatory has, with delicious irony, taken care of Jim Morrison.

Sadly we don't have to wait for a postscript. God may be in his heaven but broadband has managed to create a direct link. Whilst searching for informed debate I came across the

following. You will understand if I don't provide the link. By typing in Bob Dylan's date of birth I was able to find the equivalent Tarot card (don't ask). Apparently Dylan is a Chariot, the characteristics of which include victory through might, advancement through bold action, change through force (this may or may not encourage him to forcibly insert a microphone down the throat of the attention seeking talentless fame hungry my parents never showed me affection gobshite contestants taking part in American Idol). There is more. I am also able to find the rune equating to Robert Allen Zimmerman (Eoh – referring to the Yew tree, which apparently does not go dormant and therefore represents endurance...it bends but does not break). This rune is historically symbolic of death (It took some time but I finally got there).

Working my way through back issues of Freewheelin' it became apparent that many of the contributors have reached a point in their lives where Bob Dylan means so much to them. He helps them, and me, to approach middle age and ultimately death. His lyrics, music, and performances are peerless. He accepts that everything comes to an end. Everything is broken:

By this time I'd-a thought I would be sleeping
In a pine box for all eternity
(Saved)

I am terrified at the prospect of innumerable posthumous releases, disgusted because Sony/Columbia will ultimately view Dylan's death as an opportunity. And interpretation of lyrics will reach new lows (in truth, there isn't far to go). Someone will suggest that 'nothing left to burn' (Standing in the Doorway) signalled the end of creation (Dylan has nothing left for us to copy – an unforgivable pun and one for which I ask your forgiveness). Failing that he was telling us, as death approached, he rid himself of the past with a bonfire designed to cleanse. You get the gist. Ultimately there is nothing I can do to prevent the inevitable. Bob Dylan will die. I don't want it to happen for purely selfish reasons.

Writing this has been cathartic. I have learnt that Country music has a song for every occasion. I have also found time to consider which songs will be played at my own ceremony (Dylan's version of Hallelujah I'm Ready to Go seems a good starting point).

As for an epitaph, I am undecided but the following, with huge apologies to Kary Mullis (a Biology Laureate) seems suitable: "There is a general place in the brain, I think, reserved for 'melancholy of relationships past'. It grows and prospers as life progresses, forcing you finally, against your grain, to listen to Bob Dylan".

As for Bob himself, Suze Rotolo said just about all that needs to be said: "His art was his outlet, his exorcism. It was healthy. This was the way he wrote out his life....the loving songs, the cynical songs, the political songs.....they are all part of the way he saw his world and lived his life, period".

Until the next time my friends, go in peace and let him die in his footsteps.

P.S. What happens if you play a Country song backwards? Your truck starts, your dog is resurrected and your wife returns home...



HIPSTERS, FLIPSTERS & FINGER POPPIN' DADDIES

by C.P. Lee

The Blues Is Bluff!

The Blues is a feeling – The Blues is a song – And now the Blues is a major TV series fronted by Martin Scorsese. Time for a re-evaluation?

You may remember the three articles I wrote for Freewheelin' that attempted to show how academics and other 'concerned people' had created 'Folk Music'. Well now's the time for me to step forward once again and argue that the revered African-American musical form of the Blues isn't what it seems to be. This one is going to take us on a journey through time and space and across continents. It will leave us standing at the crossroads asking 'who was Robert Johnson'? and, amongst other places, on a windy street corner in Chicago watching a bunch of people set up a drum kit and a couple of amplifiers before belting out some 'Urban' Blues.

There's no doubting the influence that the Blues have had on Bob Dylan. Time Out of Mind is suffused with a kind of shimmering overcoat constructed from different fabrics of the Blues. Legend tells us that when he was recording his first album a 'negro' janitor at

Columbia overheard one of the sessions taking place and assumed that the young (very young) harp player and singer was an elderly Black man. Until recently his on-stage lead guitar playing was informed by the teaching of an old Blues man he'd met when a youth rather than the Claptonesque inspired meanderings that became so popular in the 1960s. And now, well into his sixties, the on-stage persona of Dylan resembles nothing more than some elderly Blues player occupying the stage. Out of all the contemporary musicians who inhabit Planet Pop, Dylan is one of the few who have a broad enough knowledge of the form to properly understand the context in which it should be viewed and played.

This month is an introduction to the themes I'll be examining in more detail over the next couple of articles. These will include – How Robert Johnson was actually quite a nice man who wasn't haunted in any way. How Leadbelly became the slave of Alan Lomax. Why Big Bill Broonzy wore a bibbed overall when he toured Europe, and why Muddy Waters didn't play guitar when he was here.

These are just a few of the topics I'm going to look at. But the most important one is – how the mythology of the Blues was a White creation. What we see as the Blues now, at a festival, in a club or on TV, is a chimera, a simulacra of something that never existed. The Blues may have been a feeling, the Blues may have been a song, but it was never a forty-five minute set with room for two encores. The Blues is actually part of the Heritage Industry – Proud to be here and serving you with its faked solos and micro-waved chitlins. All of which, of course, beggars the question – what was the Blues? A fair and entirely relevant question worthy of an attempt at answering during the course of the Blues Is Bluff.

In the meantime – A big welcome to our new Freewheelers. In particular to Trev. His introduction to Masked & Anonymous at the John Green event was an exciting indication of things to come, and let's hope he can get his book put together and out in the shops without any of the usual hassle one can get from publishers.

Talking of which, the new, revised and updated edition of my own Like The Night is supposed to be back on the shelves in July. Breath holding is not recommended. Being as how LTN is about Dylan and the Free Trade Hall if you didn't already know, the aforementioned building is being reopened as I write, this time as a five star hotel. Pam and I had a vague fantasy of staying there for a night in the Bob Dylan suite (honestly it's there!), However, we have found out that the suite costs £1400 per night and we decided to put our stay there on the back-burner ...

Apropos of nothing in particular – Bob Dylan as a judge on American Idol is one of the best things I've heard in ages. The extent at which this guy can fuck with the heads of his fans is brilliant. To presume or expect him to stay aloof from what, ordinary culture? popular culture? trash aesthetics? – is ludicrous. To actually be bothered by it - even more ludicrous. Big up to you Bob! It's a Situationist spectacle on a par with Johnny Rotten being on I'm A Celebrity.

Sorry this so short but this is a very busy time of year and all ... so adios till the next time!

PAIN IN A POSTCARD

before venturing from the mountains of Madrid to the coast of Barcelona

by Trev Gibb

Well it's a wonderful day here in Newcastle. The sun is shining, I've just had what was, very, very long hair almost completely shaved off; I'm listening to Frank Sinatra's "September of My Years" and the second year of my degree in English Literature is pretty much over - with just two essay's to complete by Wednesday ☺. I feel like a new man.

I hope you will forgive the conversational tone of my piece for this months Freewheelin', but it's been a very hectic two months and I've been trying to jam everything I possibly can into the hours that my eyes and my mind will allow me to enjoy. In fact it is only today - as I write this piece - that I'm beginning to feel some form of relief.

I've just put in for some holiday time, ten days from work, so that I'm given room to go to Dylan's shows at Newcastle on the 22nd and Glasgow on the 23rd, as well as travel to Genoa, Italy on the 25th of June for two weeks with some musician friends of mine. There's been a lot of money outgoing and as usual a lot of bills incoming, so at the back of my mind I'm hoping it all levels out and I won't regret going to Italy. Heck! You never know, if Dylan swoops close by while I'm there I may well have to break the bank and catch a show.

As you all know the subject of my 'first' and previous piece for Freewheelin' was on the issue of Dylan and selling-out to commercial interests. It was something I found fun to write about even though we now know (and probably knew anyway) that the American-Idol rumour was just a rumour and thus nothing to really worry about. However, I must admit as much as part of me was really looking forward to Dylan appearing, part of me was thinking "No Bob! It will be a shambles, don't do it!"

This month so far has seen quite a few changes: Pool's server keeps shutting down, almost all of the time nowadays – but there again, that's nothing new – Guitarist Freddy Koella has gone and has been replaced by Stu Kimbal, who actually played on Empire Burlesque back in 1985, and supposedly - according to various reviews I've read from the likes of Peter Stone Brown at rec.music.dylan – Dylan's voice is back, with the infamous wolfman vocal (almost as universally hated as the sing-song vocal) having almost completely disappeared.

Ok, so all sounds well, all sounds good. Another tour, another set of changes. This of course nips in the bud my plan to write a piece on the ever growing contributions of Freddy Koella. Oh well, who knows, it's rumoured he will be back on the UK tour, though many are saying that Stu Kimball is so promising that having Koella back would be a step

backward for Dylan's band which – even with only 3 shows having been played as I write this – appears to have improved almost instantly, and one could say, miraculously.

The word 'painful' is the key word here actually, because it brings me to a point I've wanted to discuss for a while.

Dylan said back in 1975, in reference to *Blood on The Tracks*, "how can anyone enjoy that kind of pain?" And so I ask the question - based on discussions I've had with friends, regarding the importance of pain and its translation and expression through Art -

Does pain inspire the creation of a greater and deeper 'Art' more than that of joy and happiness? I want very briefly sketch, in a kind of free-form manner, my feelings on this; in reference to Dylan.

OK, so I've taken on board quite a question, but it's an area I got quite a lot of satisfaction discussing with people in the past few weeks. And considering the limit of my time it's something I want to talk of, if even very naively and unformed.

'Great Art' for me can come from many things and 'Pain' isn't necessarily any more significant and special in inspiring Art than joy, however there are still interesting points that can be made and discussed from both sides.

However, some people are more inclined to gain some form of satisfaction and inspiration from listening to, or feeling/experiencing 'Art' translated from pain, because they can internalise it and relate it to their own reality. If they have the courage to do so that is... And so much of the time it depends upon the person as to how the Art affects you. Sometimes pain into Art is a very self-indulgent thing, something the artist and the person on the receiving end (the listener) can share in, can wallow in it even. And I like to wallow in it too.

I tend to be inclined more towards pain reflected and regurgitated through Art, I don't know why, but there's just something so profoundly deep, mystical and emotional about that sort of Art, that I find compelling, because it isn't necessarily a happy distraction from the toils of a life we often bury underground. That's probably why I love 'Standing in the Doorway' so much, or most of *Blood on the Tracks*, *Oh Mercy* and *Time out of Mind*. I'm attracted to mysticism, which I guess is Art, expressed through some form of sublime - divine even - escapist pain.

The great thing with Dylan however, is his ability to often take expression of pain to another level, by adding a double-layer and aligning it with joy. Look at the song *You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go*, that song on one level is very painful, yet it's expressed so joyously. You listen to that song and you feel the essence of a lazy summer day, things moving fast... That's an incredible thing to do, its genius... That's brilliant art! ...Aligning joy and pain like that! Wow huh? Things seem so happy outside, there's "Flowers on the hillside, blooming crazy," a "blue river running slow and lady", yet "You could make me cry, if you don't know".

However I do believe that great Art can also come from inspiration and feelings of pure joy and celebration. Some of the African world music that isn't inspired by pain and repression, but by a joy, nature and a rhythm of existence is an example of incredible joyful art in music, and yet it's pure celebration, a release, a relief and very uplifting... Not the utmost indulgent and inward. However, if we go deeper can we say that this release is loosely related to pain? ... Are they just both two sides of the coin anyways? ... Have I started contradicting myself yet? ☺

Perhaps joy into art is a very 'fluent' and 'giving' expression because it expresses a universal joy that all can share in a way that perhaps pain cannot. People fear pain and 'true reality' and that's perhaps why Dylan doesn't appeal to the masses, because he doesn't pull no punches with reality or escapism, he isn't necessarily going to sing you a simple song of joy so that you can get on the bus and forget who you are and what's happening around you, he doesn't necessarily subscribe to that.

His songs are deep and people are scared to swim in deep water. It takes courage to listen to Dylan; it takes a courage that involves opening up your own soul, your own wounds. So sometimes for people it is easier to listen to 'Brown Eyed Girl' or 'Take It Easy' because on one level it's easy, it doesn't confront you, it just keeps you happy within the distractions of consuming and denial. Don't get me wrong however; I'm a huge fan of Van Morrison and of Jackson Browne who both have in many of their songs ploughed into the depths of mysticism.

Although I think people often misinterpret the brilliance of a lot of joyous songs or joyous works of Art because there is a multitude of it in the masses and in our pop/kitsch culture, which serves to fuel our pain-distraction culture... People are scared to feel their pain, a pain they try to ignore by listening to or feeling that sort of joyous escapism, But does that stop it being Art/Artistic?.

... "Nobody feels any pain, tonight as I stand inside the rain"

...But I at least when listening to Dylan, stand inside of the rain, I get lost in the fragments of meaning and meaningless, of truth and of pain... wet droplets of time lost in confusion falling from a sky full of mysticism... I get something from it, I feel it, it is painful yet in some crazy way it's joyous in being painful... But still nobody feels any pain tonight... you choose... you choose your own path and perhaps your own pain, you choose to listen, you choose to feel, when you can bear it, if...

Anyway, I digress...

Will see you all again in textual form in a month. I'll send a postcard during my trip.

THE MISSIONARY TIMES

THE SEARCH FOR 'VISIONS OF J'

(Part One: As We Stopped In For A Beer)

by J.R.Stokes

Anyone who has strayed into the lounge at the Freewheelin House website may have taken a glimpse at the 'Freewheelers Stars and Likes'. The page is badly in need of updating (any day now) but item number 3 under my own particular 'likes' is 'The walk from Southwold to Walberswick in Suffolk'.

The little seaside town of Southwold on the Suffolk coast is an absolute treasure and the place has been something of a bolt hole for Marilyn and me since we moved to East Anglia from London some 30 odd years ago. We try to have a long weekend in Southwold about twice a year, usually out of season when an unfashionable eastern wind coming off the North sea bites at you and brings you back to reality. When you know that you are getting above your station, or when you feel that the whole world is on your case, Southwold can somehow offer a warm embrace – even in an unfashionable eastern wind! And that walk from Southwold to Walberswick, crossing the river Blyth with its adjacent gorse and reed beds, can make you feel that you have tarried on a wonderful journey for a million years instead of just half a day.

One of the delights, for me at least, about Southwold is that the town has its own brewery, namely Adnams. The brewery is a small family affair and indeed it is one of the few remaining independent breweries left in England. There are various pubs and eating places in the town and each is served with Adnams' ale from the local brewery and at certain times during the day horse drawn drays can be seen delivering barrels of the good ale to the pub round the corner. Good ale doesn't normally travel well over a distance but that few hundred yards from the brewery to, say, The Kings Head, or The Sole Bay Inn does for the ale what chocolate does for coconut to make it into a bounty bar. Of course you may not like bounty bars, or real ale for that matter, but if you go to Southwold in the spring, in the summer, autumn or winter, real ale and bounty bars can taste just like your favourite fruit. Believe me.

Over the last few years Adnams has branched out a little and, if your tippie happens not to be ale but wine, then the brewery has a shop with an extensive wine cellar displaying wines

from all over the world. And if your tippie isn't either ale or wine but you like book shop browsing then there are some great bookshops in the town; more of which later.

For a number of reasons we hadn't made our usual trip to Southwold in February of this year and for a number of other reasons, we felt that, by the end of April, we desperately needed some Southwold moments; so we booked into a B&B pub for the weekend starting Friday 14th May. I have to say that our trips to Southwold are usually Bob free, I must promise to leave the black eyed dog in the kennel back home and any Bob chat, Bob songs, Bob this or Bob that are pretty much forbidden. That is how it was meant to be for the weekend starting Friday 14th May...until I spotted an item on Expecting Rain the weekend before. It was the first item for Sunday May 9th and it read as follows:

1 - The vines they are a-changin' *The Bob Dylan fanatic who is producing extraordinary wines in a neglected corner of Italy - (telegraph) (link found by Cliff Warnken)*

I was particularly interested in this item because, as I related in my article for Freewheelin 223, we are holidaying In Italy this year and, **after** we booked our holiday (honestly, dear) news came down the line that Dylan had entered into a joint venture with an Italian vineyard owner to produce a wine to be sold later this year and to be known as 'Planet Waves' with the labels on each of the bottles of the wine to bear Dylan's signature. The vineyard owner, one Antonio Terni, has already produced a wine which he has called 'Visions of J' and as I am hankering after visiting this vineyard whilst in Italy in the summer, any item on this subject is of great interest to me.

The item from Expecting Rain lead to the wine section of the Daily Telegraph and concerned an interview between the journalist Jonathan Ray and the 'Bob Dylan fanatic' vineyard owner, the said Senor Terni. The heading of the article in The Telegraph read as follows:

'Jonathan Ray meets the Bob Dylan fanatic who is producing extraordinary wines in a neglected corner of Italy'

For those who are interested in the story – and to me this is a far more interesting Dylan venture than Victoria's Secrets or American Idol – and for those who are not but are interested in Bob related tangents, the entire article is reproduced below:

'The Marche, on Italy's Adriatic coast, is best-known to British wine drinkers as the source of that ubiquitous pizza-parlour white wine, Verdicchio. It is also home to rich and robust reds such as Rosso Piceno and, best of all, Rosso Conero, a scrumptious wine made from Montepulciano.

Inexplicably, this lovely region between Emilia-Romagna and Abruzzo continues to be largely overlooked by British wine lovers. More fool them, because some real gems can be found in this beautiful land of mountains, rolling hills, medieval walled villages and sandy beaches.

Among them is the small-scale but top-quality Fattoria Le Terrazze. Owned by Antonio and Georgina Terni, this small winery lies at the end of a sweeping avenue of mulberry trees near Numana, a small fishing town on the coast some 14 miles from Ancona.

Fifty-year-old Antonio Terni, who is a nuclear engineer, yachtsman and Bob Dylan fanatic, looks an unlikely wine-maker. Tall, bearded and wearing faded blue jeans, he sports a leopardskin fedora and trails clouds of cigar smoke in his wake. His background is far from typical. "I'm a Jewish Italian who was born in Argentina," he says in perfect English. "My wife is an English Catholic who I met during the Falklands spat".

"I am like the guy in the Beatles' song, Nowhere Man. I don't feel any particular allegiance, except when Italy play Argentina at football, when I am most definitely Italian."

The 50-acre vineyard (of which only 30 are in production) was planted by Terni's grandfather in 1882 and subsequently nurtured by his father. The vineyards were completely renovated during the 1980s, when Terni decided that winemaking was more fun than nuclear engineering.

Le Terrazze produces three different Rosso Conero DOCs (the wine is named after nearby Monte Conero), and although a 15 per cent dollop of Sangiovese would be permitted, all are made solely from Montepulciano.

The standard, but fruitily rumbustious, example is followed by Sassi Neri, named after the nearby beach, which is black in summer because of the mussels there. "It's a rather good wine," says Antonio, "only just behind Sassicaia (one of Italy's top wines) – well, alphabetically at least."

The third wine is Visions of J, named after the Bob Dylan song Visions of Johanna, and made only in especially fine vintages (the last one was 1997). Terni likes to serve these reds cool rather than at room temperature, which inevitably sparks a good-natured debate with Georgina, his wife, who prefers the wines warmer.

All three wines go perfectly with the local specialities, such as rich pasta dishes, game, smoked meats or porchetta – roasted pig stuffed with herbs, garlic and wild fennel.

Terni has also come up with a Super-Marche, an unlikely blend of half Montepulciano, half Merlot/Syrah, called, in a nod to his previous nuclear engineering career, Chaos, after the theory. The first vintage was 1997, and it has been a runaway success, not least, reckons Terni, because nobody else has created a blend like it. It more than justifies its £20-plus price tag. A subtle 100 per cent Chardonnay called Le Cave completes Le Terrazze's portfolio, the total annual production of which comes to a mere 8,500 cases.

Later this year, in a further homage to his hero, Terni will be releasing a new Merlot/Montepulciano blend named after Dylan's 1974 album, Planet Waves. This project has the personal endorsement of the master himself, and the labels all bear Dylan's signature. But despite Terni's great excitement about the project, he doesn't plan to increase production any further, because, he says, "I'd have to go round the

world and sell it.” Nor does he plan to set up a website. “I believe that it is far more important to enjoy the journey.”

The truth is that he has other demands on his time. He calls himself one of Dylan’s Bobcats – the term given to only the most devoted fans. “He is the coolest thing ever,” says Terni, who has seen him in concert more than 80 times.

Where most winemakers prefer to immerse themselves in works by Hugh Johnson, Jancis Robinson or Robert Parker, Terni’s bookshelves are crammed with back numbers of Total Guitar and books with titles such as The Art and Music of John Lennon, and Nuclear Reactor Theory. When he isn’t listening to one of his 350 Dylan CDs he finds peace by strumming his electric guitar.

“My life is full of many pleasures,” he says through a haze of cigar smoke. “My father never pushed me into the wine business. I made the decision myself and it’s one of the best things I ever did.”

Antonio Terni’s wines are sold at Adnams (01502 727222) and Berry Bros & Rudd (0870 900 4300).’

The article filled in a few gaps about the Dylan/vineyard situation but my eyes became ping pong balls on stalks when I spotted those details about the wholesalers of the wine in the UK. There are just two wholesalers in the Country namely Berry Brothers & Rudd Limited, a very high class wine merchants of St. James, Street, London W.1. and the other.....Adnams of Southwold – the place I know and love and where I was going to spend the coming weekend.

Now, I am not the sort of guy who cheats on his wife but there was a promise about to be broken. How could I possibly leave behind all things Bob when I had the chance to search out that special wine, ‘Visions of J’ that was produced under a warm Italian sun with the strains of ‘Blonde on Blonde’ wafting over a vine laden hillside? And hadn’t I just recently completed 65,000 words on the very song, the title of which had been given to this divine juice from the grapes? It was all so close to home that I shivered with some kind of honed affinity between that bottle and me. I needed to drink that wine. Promises are made to be broken anyway!

So, clutching a copy of the article from the wine section of The Telegraph, I ventured into the ‘Adnams of Suffolk’ wine store early on Saturday morning 15th May. There weren’t many people around so I had the sole undivided attention of Simon, the very helpful shop assistant. Like the long suffering wives of Mark Carters ‘Sad Dylan Fans’ Marilyn had long given up the protest and she just raised her eyebrows from the back of the shop, the way the Queen does when one of her corgis gets savaged by Princess Anne’s bull terrier.

I showed Simon the article, pointed out the words ‘*Antonio Terni’s wines are sold at Adnams*’, promptly asked for a bottle of ‘Visions of J’ and held my breath.

‘Mmmmm’ hesitated Simon as he punched some words into the store’s computer system ‘Don’t know that one’.

'Well, it says here that you stock it.' I remonstrated, getting slightly agitated the way I usually do when I think that shop assistants have their minds on the latest Corrie plot rather than looking after me. But Simon clearly wasn't a fan of Corrie for he hit the right button straight away.

'Yep, here it is. Fattoria Le Terrazze.... We have some in stock... follow me to the cellar'. 'I'm going down to the cellar with Simon' I mouthed to Marilyn as the bull terrier ripped into another corgi. 'Won't be a mo.'

As it turned out we were rather more than 'a mo,' and when we returned from the cellar, the shop floor was strewn with dead corgis. I had two bottles of red wine in my hands but, grief upon grief, and despite an extended search, they were not the holy grail of 'Visions of J'. They were however from the Dylan inspired vineyard being the Rosso Conero's that were mentioned in the article from The Telegraph. And, at over £10.00 per bottle, it meant that it was a sarnie and a packet of crisps for lunch rather than a prawn salad on the pier. I couldn't get too depressed though: we were in Southwold after all where troubles melt like lemon drops and that wonderful walk to Walberswick awaits

Before we left Adnams, Simon did try to find out more about the elusive 'Visions of J' but a search through his records could not produce any information and a similar search I subsequently made my self at Berry Brothers and Rudd website has also failed to produce the goods. There remains only one thing for it: a trip to the vineyard in Italy. Watch this space. In the meantime the, as yet uncorked, Rosso Conero will bring Antonio's vineyard a little closer to home.

It was a while back but I did mention the bookshops of Southwold. There are a good few of them and they are the sort of places where odd kinds of books, at knocked down prices, can be found. In one of these book shops, I just couldn't resist a rather fat looking book called 'The Hippie Dictionary'. Almost 700 pages of hippie terms and explanations – a wordsmith's delight. And, in the event that you think a Hippie dictionary is somewhat trivial and frivolous, then just get this from the author, one John Bassett McCleary about the Hippie era:

'I contend that the hippie era was the intellectual renaissance of the 20th century. I believe it came about because of an emotional rebellion against the mindless direction in which our world was headed. I believe the hippie era gave this world and human society a reprieve. Without the new emotions and outlook of the hippie era, the world would be a dull place today. Without the philosophies and ideals espoused during the hippie era and expressed in books like Nobody Knows My Name, On The Road, Silent Spring and 1984, then 1984 would have become a reality. The 60s counterculture postponed the oppressive police state that was overtaking society. Now many people feel that, unless we have another intellectual rebellion, 1984 and its political oppression will indeed happen sometime in the 2020s. That is the reason for this dictionary; that is why I am reacquainting you with the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s.'

Wow! Right on! (As we used to say).

Obviously my eye went straight to the subjects listed under the 4th letter of the alphabet but before I get there, here are a couple of other interesting headings:

'Rainy day woman' - (page 396) *'a marijuana joint. Supposedly from Bob Dylan's 1965 song of the same name. An activity a lonely man might pursue to entertain himself on a rainy day.'*

Whatever does that last sentence mean? Surely not!

'Tambourine man' - (page 478) *'in some places, this meant a drug dealer. Origin unknown.'*

Well, I think we all know where that one comes from, which leads me on to:

'Bob Dylan' - (page 148) *Philosopher, poet, songwriter, singer... Dylan is considered the foremost spokesman of the hippie era. Starting with his first album, Dylan mirrored the personality of the age. Even his abrupt and controversial adoption of electric music at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival was an indication of the rebellious and experimental nature of the growing counter culture. Bob Dylan's most important trait is that he is continually movin' on.... One of the most 25 most influential people of the hippie era. Actually, he could be considered the most influential person of that era. I venture to say that he will rank on everyone's list among the top 100 most influential people of the 20th Century and, then again, maybe the 21st as well...'*

So, to recap: Bob Dylan: possibly the most influential person of the intellectual renaissance of the 20th century. I think we could all go along with that! And finally, on page 186 of The Hippie Dictionary:

'Freewheelin(g)' - *adventuresome. Of an open, positive and playful nature. Could be considered arrogant; yet, in the context of the hippie demeanor, it was just fun loving.'*

Not sure about the arrogance but 'adventuresome', 'open', 'positive', 'playful' and 'fun loving'; whether we are old hippies or young Turks; whether we get called Doctors or whether we get called Chiefs; whether we like to eat caviar or whether we like to eat bread: those terms will serve us nicely!