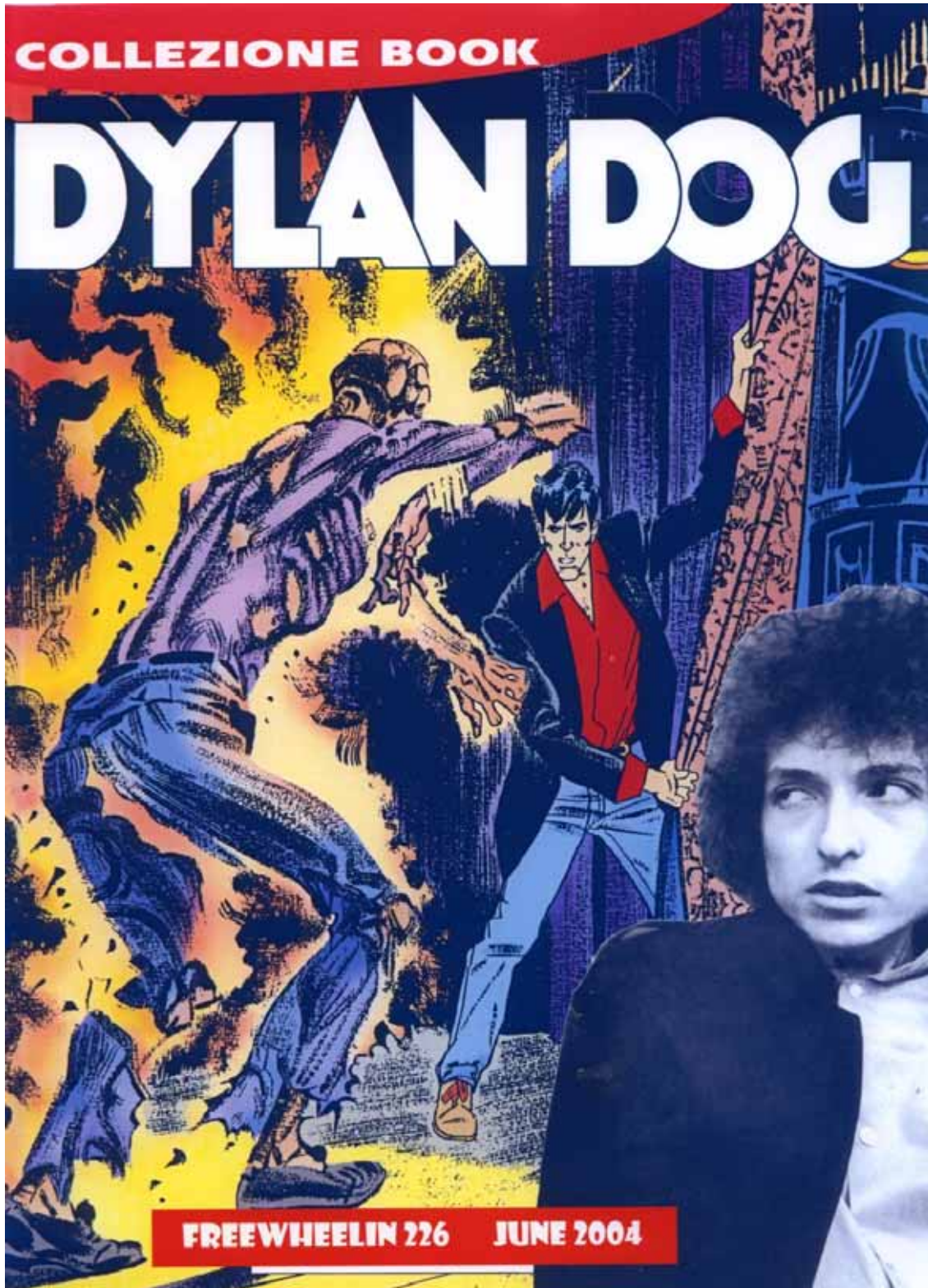


Freewheelin-on-line

Take Twenty Eight



Coverdown

Freewheelin 226

The backdrop to this month's Freewheelin cover comes from a hard back cartoon book that cried out to me from a news stand whilst holidaying in Italy. Perhaps it was the title of the book: 'Dylan Dog' that grabbed me but on taking a closer look I found that this item was number 97 in a collection of 'Dylan Dog' books that has now reached over 200. These hardback collectors books are published by Sergio Bonelli Editore of Milan and the artist who created the artwork for this particular book is one Carlo Ambrosini.

The concept of the 'Dylan Dog' character (who is the beefcake in the scarlet shirt and jeans in this cover) is somewhat surreal as the following description illustrates: 'He is the only Investigator of Nightmares in the world. He is fascinated by fear, and has made it his profession. He doesn't move far from home, but he's constantly travelling through the most obscure labyrinths of the human mind!'

Dylan Dog's assistants are the moustached Groucho, Inspector Bloch and the colourful Lord H.G. Wells amongst others and his women are 'Gentle femme fatale types, romantic, lost. Dylan is quite ready to fall in love with each one of them...'

Apparently Dylan Dog is often confronting monsters, as he is here, but they are not actually monsters, they are identical to the real characters in the books - kind of scary twins. Talking of which ... our own Dylan (who is of course himself a scary twin) seems to be freaked out by Dylan Dog's monster, for his complexion is much too white. But then again, perhaps he has stumbled into someone's nightmare and has realized that, whatever way you look at it, life is all just a series of dreams (or nightmares)!

Freewheelin-on-line take twenty eight (freewheelin 226)



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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-On-Line by Chris Cooper

Issue 226

It's the start of July and another UK Tour just finished, saw quite a few shows, and I am glad to say so did the tapers by the look of things. Some films already in from the recent shows and, hopefully a lot more to follow. But first there are a few stragglers to gather up.



D3 A7 S8 H8 F 8 I BC3

15-07-1988 INDIANAPOLIS

90.00

Subterranean Homesick Blues (s) / Just Like A Woman/ John Brown/ Masters Of War/
Tangled Up In Blue / Stuck Inside Of Mobile / It Ain't Me Babe/ Trail Of The Buffalo/
Don't Think Twice/ I Shall Be released/ Silvio/ Like A Rolling Stone
The Times They Are A-Changin / All Along The Watchtower

Get to see this. No it's not very close, but it is steady and clear, and an amazing sight to see. The whole band just strut the stage constantly. If you want to be reminded of how animated he could be, look no further.



D5 A7 S8 H8 F 7 I BC6

20-07-1989 ATLANTIC CITY

83.00

Most Likely You'll Go your Way/ Lenny Bruce/John Brown/ I Want You /You're a Big Girl Now/ Highway 61 Revisited/ Mama You Bin On My Mind @/ Its Alright Ma @/ Boots Of Spanish Leather @/ Silvio/ Leopardskin Pillbox Hat/ Legend In My Time/ In the Garden/ Like A Rolling Stone
It Ain't Me Babe/ Maggie's Farm

Back in '89 again, and once more we get treated to a very lively Bob. We also get the rather unusual "Legend" which sounds pretty autobiographical these days. This film is a bit too dark really, but still worthy of your attention.



D3 A7 S7 H7 F7 I BR3

28-10-1990 ATHENS, GEORGIA

89.00

Silvio/ Simple Twist Of Fate/ What Was It you Wanted/ Gotta Serve Somebody/ Tomorrow Is A Long Time / Highway 61 Revisited/ Ballad Of Hollis Brown @/ Gates Of Eden @/ Mr Tambourine Man @/ It Ain't Me Babe @/ Joey (e) / I Want You (s) / TV Talking Song/ Maggies Farm/ I Shall Be Released/ Like A Rolling Stone
Blowin In The Wind @ All Along the Watchtower

Odd one this, odd because despite it being slightly out of focus, and Dylan in bumbling mood, and the band are not too tight, I rather like it! There is a warmth to the performance. It captures the encores well with the audience at the bottom of the screen

leaping about as the group strut about. Bob was cooling by the end of 90, and this shows here, but it's till entertaining



PRO TV

00-03-04 Tribute To The Apollo

6.00

A Change Is Gonna Come

This is pretty hot stuff, lovely intimate filming from this new TV appearance. Almost essential stuff this. Whilst a nice authored copy is about it's still only from VHS so I am hoping we will see a direct digital copy yet.



PRO TV

05-05-04 Wiltern Theatre, LA

5.00

You Win Again

This arrived on the same disc as the Apollo track, so the same aspirations on quality apply. Not so performance sadly. Oh, this is "OK" but no more I fear, at times they seem uncertain who should be taking lead vocal. I do hope the upcoming tour produces better results.



D6 A8 S7 H8 F8 I BL4

18-05-2004 ARENA, CARDIFF

55.00

Highway 61 Revisited / Shooting Star/ Stuck Inside Of Mobile (b) / Honest With Me/ It Ain't Me Babe/ Summer Days

Cat's In the Well / Like A Rolling Stone / All Along The Watchtower

Sadly incomplete, this was certainly not one of the best of the UK shows though here it does come over pretty well. Certainly less light than previous years has taken a toll on the picture quality a little also.



D3 A8 S7 H7 F8 I SR

20-06-2004 FLEADH FESTIVAL, LONDON

55.00

Down Along The Cove (b) / It's All Over Now, Baby Blue (i)/ Lonesome Bedroom Blues (i)/ Maggie's Farm (i) / Desolation Row (f)/ Seeing The Real You At Last (i)/ Positively Fourth Street/ Tweedle Dum & Tweedle Dee / High Water (i) / Highway 61 Revisited (f)/ Not Dark Yet (i)/ Homest With me (i)/ Summer Days (F) / Like A Rolling Stone
Approach with caution ! Shot from various positions as the intrepid filmer tries for the elusive clear view. It has some nice moments, but not many. A pity as for outdoor gigs this was a pretty good show. And of course we had Ron Wood clowning about throughout the show.



D6 A7 S7 H8 F7 I BR3

22-06-2004 METRO ARENA, NEWCASTLE

99.00

Seeing the Real You At last (f)/ Tell Me That It Isn't True/ Lonesome Day Blues/ Under The Red Sky/ Cold Irons Bound/ Ring Them Bells/ Tweedle Dum & Tweedle Dee/ This Wheels On Fire/ Highway 61 Revisited / Hattie Carroll/ Bye & Bye/ Honest With me/ Masters Of War / Summer Days
If Not For You/ Like A Rolling Stone/ All Along the Watchtower
Now this is certainly a bit more like it. Pretty much the whole show and generally clear and mostly steady view. The light again alas could be better but all aside it's a pleasant view, and of course a fairly well rounded setlist/ performance.



D6 A8 S8 H8 F7 I BR4

23-06-2004 S.E.C.C. GLASGOW

104.00

Wicked Messenger/ Times They Are A-Changin/ Cry6 Awhile (f)/ Trying to get To Heaven/ It's Alright Ma / Stuck Inside Of Mobile/ Man In the Long Black Coat/ Tweedle Dum & Tweedle Dee/ Boots Of Spanish Leather / I Don't Believe You/ Forever Young (s) / Honest With Me/ Every Grain Of Sand / Summer Days/ Don't Think Twice. Its Alright / Like A Rolling Stone / All Along The Watchtower
Possible the best of this bunch, nice performance and pretty clear, steady view. A bit more light would have helped. But Bob looks like he was enjoying himself anyway.



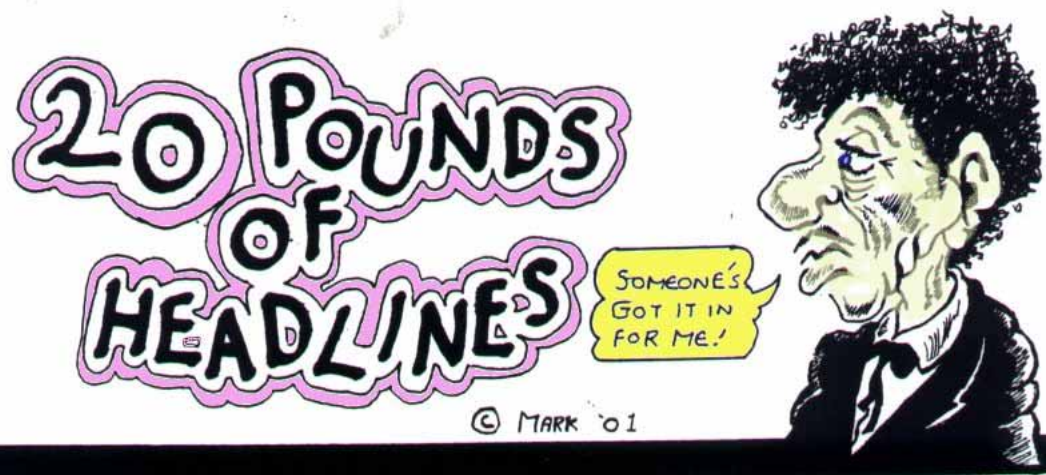
D8 A8 S7 H7 F8 I SR

24-06-2004 BARROWLAND, GLASGOW

28.00

Just like A Woman (i) / Girl Of the North Country/ It Ain't Me Babe/ I Believe In You/ Don't Think Twice, Its Alright/ All Along the Watchtower (f)
This was going to be THE show right? Well it was certainly a good performance with some great singalongs, but not the most unusual setlist. Anyway this guy is standing pretty near Bob, and what we get is pretty nice, if rather short. But certainly one to look out for.

Till Next Time



By Mark Carter

This month I thought I'd play catch-up on some of the slightly older material that kind of got shunted out of the way by the European Autumn 2003 tour reviews, and this gives me a good chance to do it before we begin the USA 2004 tour review roundup next month. Lots of odds and sods that don't really have a theme as such but don't deserve to be entirely ignored either.

Back in November 2003, Peter Doggett took a long lingering look at the SACD releases, beginning with an overview of Dylan's approach to recording (i.e. usually a very tentative approach, at best), which also includes a fairly detailed examination of the remastering process itself, and concluding with a discussion on the merits of the new discs themselves. Whilst admitting that *Love And Theft* and the 1999-remastered *Street Legal* bring very little new to the table, Doggett finds practically everything else to be an immense improvement, especially the acoustic discs and *Desolation Row*. "Bob Dylan's music," he concludes, "arguably the most important catalogue in rock history - has never sounded so strong, or so real."

Meanwhile, *Masked And Anonymous* was not getting quite such a glowing reception, and its release in the US on DVD meant that a whole new brace of critics could slag it off. This would certainly be true of some anonymous hack from [*The Boston Phoenix*](#) who awarded it a whole one star and somewhat grudgingly concluded that "without Dylan's music - and there are some creative modernisations of his classics - the whole tawdry spectacle might have been a Class A flop". Here in Blighty, John Patterson, writing in an unknown newspaper, praised its "defiant hit-and-miss aesthetic" and reckoned that "it looks great, occasionally rising from incoherence into profundity and, for us Bob-heads (though probably not for anyone else), it's an absolute treat".

Jesse Shanks of digitallyobsessed.com was somewhat befuddled by the whole thing, but did reveal that "there are some interesting moments in Masked And Anonymous that almost make me want to figure out what it might all be about." And while he accepts that "the film is saved by the music" (unlike, say, Hearts Of Fire, this is not a movie that I'd necessarily consider needs saving, by music or anything else), he does reveal that "Bob can't act" (again, unlike HOP, while it may be true that Dylan can't act in the conventional sense, he can be the character he's playing, and I would suggest that he is Jack Fate, but never was -and never will be - Billy Parker). Of the DVD extras, Larry Charles' commentary is considered to be entertaining and informative about the actual making of the movie, but of no use to anyone hoping that he is going to reveal the whole meaning to the film, whilst the Masked And Anonymous Exposed featurette is dismissed as "a self-congratulatory piece of fluff". Still, none of us really expected Dylan to contribute to the commentary or any specially-filmed DVD extras, did we? Did we? You did?? Bit daft, wasn't it?

Meanwhile, back in July, [The Word's](#) Tony De Metur was reporting on the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, where Dylan is headlining on the Friday night and, unlike his last appearance there a decade ago, this time he's on form; "...That an artist who's been so present and influential for 40 years should still be on the cutting edge when he's into his 60s is a truly inspiring sight...his performance has a fire in it to match the late afternoon sun and completely blows away the massive crowd."

Now, here's the first couple of Live 1964 reviews - there will be plenty more during the next couple of months, I can assure you! Thorn Jurek of [All Music Guide](#) awarded it four stars and claimed; "All of the songs are delivered with the confidence of the seasoned performer, a man who knows his audience and how to handle them. It's not cynical, not detached, just masterful...For those interested in the transition from acoustic to electric, this show is the seam." [Uncut's](#) Nigel Williamson unsurprisingly heaped upon it the maximum five stars, calling Don't Think Twice "unbelievable" and his rapport with the audience "extraordinary" before concluding; "...Pretty soon he'd be cranking up his amp and angrily telling The Hawks to "play fuckin' loud". But this live recording proves his genius crackled with electricity long before he ever plugged in."

[Mojo's](#) John Harris related the history of The Basement Tapes in fairly lengthy detail, revealing nothing revelatory to us but providing a decent overview to anyone who might be new to one of the greatest periods of Dylan's life. He even provides a checklist of the 20 best unreleased Basement numbers, assuming, not unreasonably, that anyone interested enough in reading the entire article will probably already have them or, at least, know where to get them.

Sticking with the Woodstock period, Angeiika Hager of Austria's [Profit](#) interviewed the 74 year-old Marlene Czernin who worked as housekeeper for the Dylans during the late 1960s and early 1970s. She reveals that the family loved animals and that cats, dogs and rabbits had the run of the house. Bob had a habit of leaving his clothes laying around the floor and mainly ate tuna fish that Sara prepared for him. She never got too close to her boss, and he even left the kitchen table once partway through his meal when Czernin sat down near him. "Don't take it personally," Sara told her, "He just can't stand it if people come too close to him." Amongst the garbage she recalls throwing out were handwritten drafts for Tarantula, a Triumph t-shirt (not **the** Triumph t-shirt, surely??!) and a parcel addressed, but never sent, to Joan Baez, containing "mutual

recordings". Oh, what price that dustbin's contents nowadays? Eventually, she and her husband left their employment after Dylan let his dogs crap on a freshly cleaned wooden floor and rip up the upholstery. Bob's parting words were that she had done "a wonderful job".

Onto books, where Mike Marqusee's *Chimes Of Freedom: The Politics Of Bob Dylan's Art* received three stars courtesy of Nigel Williamson in November's *Uncut* and *The Guardian's* Richard Williams also praised it, despite not agreeing with everything that Marqusee writes; "...His small errors are redeemed, however, by the diligence with which he evokes an era of high ideals and the achievements of it's fugitive poet."

November's *London Review Of Books* carried a massive review of Christopher Ricks' *Dylan's Visions Of Sin* by Thomas Jones, during which he reveals that, while it may not be the ultimate study of Dylan's words (step forward Michael Gray for that accolade, suggests Jones), it is certainly not the worst. I'd have to agree with him on that score - it's not the worst book on Dylan's writing. Just one of them.

In January, *Q* published the first instalment in it's 50 Years Of Rock 'n' Roll series, this one covering the 1960s. Dylan is, of course featured prominently, covering (again) his transition from acoustic folkie to electric rock 'n' roller. Nothing that need detain us, of course, but it's factually correct, nicely illustrated and free from any amusing (sic) photo captions.

February's *Record Collector* featured a tongue-in-cheek article on the most over-rated acts in rock (designed, no doubt, to provoke a slew of "How dare you include such-and-such in your article?" letters. Which it did). Dylan is one of them ("...Please retire with what little dignity you have left. And blow your damned nose, for Pete's sake") but he's in good company, along with Bowie, Lennon, Zappa, Prince and the Sex Pistols. I'd even go so far as to agree with one entry; Van Morrison (described here, quite succinctly, as "a miserable c****"). In the same issue, Gavin Martin penned an entertaining and informative piece on the 1992 recording sessions with David Bromberg, presumably in light of the fact that a tape has recently surfaced - a tape that Martin has obviously heard, given the glowing review it receives here. Indeed, Martin reckons that Dylan's post-1990 writer's block may have even begun to be...er, unblocked during those sessions, especially during the recording of one particular song; "...Just how important Catskill Serenade was in Dylan conquering his writer's block is hard to gauge. But it's even possible to detect it's influence in his most recently released original song, the eight-minute epic 'Cross The Green Mountain...it undoubtedly emerges from the same haunted realm." Martin then veers off to discuss briefly *Masked And Anonymous* and the legendary November London shows, before concluding that Dylan's career revival continues apace, and, bringing us around full circle, suggests that it may have all begun back at the Bromberg sessions; "...it seems clear that the sessions, and particularly *Catskill Serenade*, served their purpose. In his creative 2nd personal life, Dylan had known the feelings of loss, fear and abandonment expressed in the lyric. Only by facing up and bearing witness to them could he conquer his demons and move on."

March 2004's *Word* carried a piece called 'The Man Who Loved Women' and is, as you might expect, a lengthy article on Bob's 40-year dalliance with various ladies, ranging from various wives, well-known girlfriends (Suze, Joan Buyez) and those whom he only had perhaps the odd knee-trembler with (Bette Midler, Dana Gillespie, Edie Sedgwick). No revelations here of yet more "secret wives" but it does feature a couple of more rarer

photos and provides a fascinating potted history into what appears to be Bob's favourite offstage activity.

When not touring or chasing women, Dylan seems to still enjoy shopping for clothes. [The Duluth News Tribune](#) reported that Dana Cosier, co-owner of Duluth's Bullseye Silkscreen shop is "99.9%" certain that he visited her shop on January 13th and bought two shopping bags full of shirts. The mystery shopper was accompanied by a woman (yeah, sounds like Bob) and was dressed in a winter coat with hood and a cap pulled down over his face (yeah, definitely sounds like Bob). The woman said that the shirts were for gifts and Cosier refrained from asking for his autograph because "I wanted to respect his privacy...It was pretty clear he didn't want to be noticed."

During January, John Walsh interviewed Joan Baez for [The Independent](#) and she was quite willing to describe her legendary affair with Dylan, which, she claims, only lasted three months. He was, she admits, not the most hygienic of people; "...He's...sloppy. But if you're crazy about someone, it doesn't matter. As soon as you're not crazy about them, it becomes obnoxious pretty fast. You can take some artistic liberties, and all of us do to some extent -but he takes them all....But put it this way - when people say to me; 'You're going to be linked to him in history forever',I think that's a pretty fucking honourable place to be."

Finally for this month, actor David Carradine was interviewed for [Uncut](#) by Damien Love and revealed that he taught Dylan a bit of kung fu during the 1970s when it was all the rage; "...Bob took some lessons. He didn't really stick with it, but it was fun....Bob knows how to take care of himself. I know he seems like just a little wimpy guy, but he's an amateur boxer. As a matter of fact, he used to spar with Quentin (Tarantino), who's an amateur boxer himself...Bob showed aptitude for kung fu. Kind of a natural, actually. But I don't think it interested him enough'.

And if the image of Bob sparring with Quentin Tarantino is going to haunt your every waking moment, then I'll sign off for this month and let you get on with it.

Tee tee ef en.

THANKS TO: DEREK BARKER and JENS WINTER.



The Whole Wide World is watching

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

Summer Days!!

1. ***Finger-picking Good*** – New guitarist Stu says his recruitment went something like this: an audition on a day's notice, Dylan's approval, two rehearsals, and then Europe for his debut with the band. With his knack for terse, melodic, bluesy solos Kimball is a fine replacement for guitarist Freddie Koella. He's also had some experience with Dylan's music before, having played on Tight Connection to My Heart, Never Gonna See the Sun Again, and When the Night Comes Falling from the Sky on the rock-and-roll poet's Empire Burlesque.
2. ***Picking up the Pieces*** - A new jigsaw puzzle feature has appeared on the ISIS website. Depending on how much time you have, you choose the level of difficulty, from 6 pieces, to a challenging 247 piece cut and choose from various shaped pieces.
3. ***Widow's Peak*** - The widows of late rock legends Roy Orbison and George Harrison have teamed up to release a series of lost recordings their husbands made as part of 1980s supergroup the Travelling Wilburys. Orbison and Harrison teamed up with Tom Petty, Bob Dylan and Jeff Lynne to record hits like End of the Line and Handle With Care, and many fans thought the group died when Orbison passed away in 1988. But now, Orbison's widow Barbara and Harrison's wife Olivia are planning to release recordings that have been out of circulation for nearly a decade, with a few rare cuts. Barbara Orbison says, "You can listen to it and it is just like boys having fun together. You can really feel the absence of any business stresses. They are having a good time. There's the excitement of being in a band called the Travelling Wilburys. "It was a special moment in time. It brought out the best in all of them." Orbison has been working on a Travelling Wilburys video set that she hopes to release by the end of 2004.



Bob Dylan portrait by A.Fortier

ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE 'Of Poachers and Game Old Birds' by Michael Crimmins

Forty one years after Bob Dylan's first major concert booking at The Town Hall in New York City, there he was, I am glad to say, in front of me once more at the Metro Radio Arena in Newcastle Upon Tyne, Bob Dylan that is! He dressed like Jimmy Rodgers and I swear he did look great! Was he good? Yes he was bloody good. The last Dylan show I attended was last November's Sheffield Arena, the one just prior to those much talked of London gigs. Forty years later and much talked of! Can't be bad can it? Much praise is most of what I heard and only a couple of years down the line from articles appearing that were so sorry to see.

Does Dylan get to read articles such as Terry Kelly's 'Dressing and Undressing the Emperor'? Appearing in *The Bridge* (No.13.) For the autumn of 2002, and if he does, does he care? Well maybe he does, and maybe like the rest of us he does need the proverbial kick up the back side now and again. While Terry's article portrayed some undeniable home truths about both Bob and his fans, I felt, and still do, that *The Emperor* was, and perhaps will be for a long time, far from unclothed. Having said that I have to say it was a good article.

Not long before this, and in response to Dylan's 5th of April performance in Stockholm, came Michael Gray's piece for the *Sunday Telegraph* 'On the trail of the Bobcat'. We get to know, from this what Dylan is thinking no less! Now I think that song analysis is fair enough but...

"Where his concerts were events, in which he an artist of genius lived in the dangerous moment, now he plays safe and seems to have no reason to be there. Where he didn't

care what the audience thought because he had his own vision and was way ahead of us, now he doesn't care what the audience thinks because he thinks it's a gullible rabble"

Michael also communicates his observations on the Dylan faithful to us, through the dangerous medium of the printed word, where a nod and a wink, if expressed, can sometimes be hard to detect.

"I begin to see blokes with moustaches, wounded eyes and unclean skin, sporting pot bellies and grubby jackets walking in two's and three's. If these men look like poachers, their women look like game old birds"

I am a Michael Gray admirer, that is to say that I have read, and like most of what he has written on the subject of Bob Dylan. I was not offended by this article, just a little bewildered. My understanding and level of appreciation of Dylan's art was so increased through Michael's writing down through the years, that it came as a shock to read "On the Trail of The Bobcat" It is not what he says, but why, that bothers me! At the time I could not wait to get hold of a bootleg recording of the Stockholm show to see just how bad it was. Actually I thought that it was quite good! In fact I would go as far to say that the shows "Sugarbaby" is superior to the 'Love and Theft' version. You will also, in my estimation, go a long way also to find a more expressive Bob than the one you can hear on "Make You Feel my Love". It is also worth bearing in mind that the following show on April 7th in Oslo, Norway featured something like, ten different songs from those played on the 5th.

The reason that I made mention of Terry Kelly's article for The Bridge a little earlier, was to illuminate the fact that Michael was not alone in his frustration with Bob Dylan and his faithful. For myself I realise that Dylan's powers are diminishing, though the rate of this slide suits me when the artist can create and release an absolute pearl like 'Love and Theft' so late in his career. I, like others, find some concerts better than others, and I would have to admit that the 2002 Newcastle Arena appearance, that prompted the Terry Kerry article, was not one of his very best. It was still good though, and made more memorable for me when Bob played a most lovely and predominantly acoustic guitar version of "Song to Woody" second song in. I go to these gigs to catch magic moments like these, and he has rarely let me down. But maybe I'm just gullible.

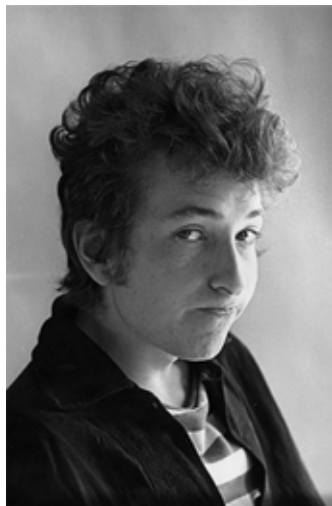
Anyway back to the moment, where Dylan, with the exception of 1991, always exists. The Newcastle, June 22nd appearance. Dylan is working hard these days to enunciate through the gravel of his larynx, and on this occasion he communicated an ongoing love for the performance of his fantastic catalogue through a clarity that is either there for you or it isn't!

The five songs from 'Love & Theft' and the fact that only seven songs came from his most productive and successful period of the sixties, dismissed out of hand any talk of living on past glories. The sheer beauty of "Hattie Carroll" and "Ring Them Bells" could not be delivered in this way by an artist who has no respect for the ears that listen! A band such as this could not possibly perform together so well, without the utmost respect

for these great songs and their composer who is a part of it. They stand in line to face the audience, before the almost obligatory encore. Shoulder to shoulder, unsmilingly, asking a little arrogantly “Are you satisfied”.

After spending a couple of hours (well nearly) with Bob Dylan who is most definitely a cultural hero, it is true that besides introducing the band he did not speak, but I could not bring myself to call him, as Terry Kelly does “uncommunicative”! He wasn’t playing a guitar at all, well not directly, so I could hardly accuse him of “illogically free- form string plucking”. To call Dylan uncommunicative, even though I understood in what context the remark was made, I find most ironic.

Dylan respectfully repeated only five songs from the twenty one that he had played at his previous 2002 Newcastle appearance, and only three from the one before that in 2000. Larry Campbell I find is an absolutely perfect musician whom plays acoustic and electric guitars, pedal steel, cittern and other instruments with an almost spiritual devotion. New man Stu Kimball has big boots to fill in those of Freddie Koella, who may or may not be returning to the band, yet he looks to be a very disciplined player not really, for the moment at least, muddying the lines between lead and rhythm playing as his predecessor, whom had the audacity to not only understand Bobs guitar soloing of recent times, but to incorporate it into his own style. Ever present NET bass man Tony Garnier rarely takes his eyes away from Bob Dylan. He is such an obvious fan that it is so good to know that he is officially captured for posterity within the confines of ‘Masked & Anonymous’. George Recile is a rare drummer who I would bet never lets a roadie/technician near his kit to tune it etc. “Cold Iron Bounds” is his now that Dylan no longer compliments with his equally primal guitar playing, I do miss that –Ah but you caint have it all –Dylan is singing so well these days!





God-Awful?

by **Chris Cooper**

Hi folks,

Afraid there has been little time to write about my recent exploits, or about the tour generally as I have been somewhat occupied with work, and putting together the largest MM is quite some time, so this will be of necessity short.

Next month I will bore you all with tales of the shows, for this month though let's stick with TV stuff.

Any of you get to see Dylan's appearance at St Andrews to get his degree? The press up there were full of it, I also saw some on TV but being away from home never got to record it, though a helpful mate is soon to send me a copy. I don't understand there just what happened. The Scots a pretty proud lot and falling asleep at the ceremony was really a bad thing to do. The papers up there all showed their indignation at Bob's behaviour. I understand, from private reports and not newspapers that he only showed for about the last 20 minutes of the ceremony, basically his bit. Could he not stay with it that long? Lately Bob seems much more happy to collect the awards and titles that are offered, I think the least he can do is stay away for them. Sure he had played a show the day before. Sure he was due to play one that night also, but the distances were not great for someone who is used to jetting around as Dylan is. Try harder next time Bob.

Whilst up there I finally bought a copy of "Gods & Generals" so if you have not seen it yet, or intend to buy it then beware. First the essential bit, yes the video is included on the disc, but its the same edited version that was given free with the soundtrack album. Second, this lengthy film has been placed over two sides of the same DVD. The sides therefore are not clearly labeled and it's pretty easy to get them muddled. In my machine the disc also slipped twice due to this I think. But most of all this is a lonng film. And I am not referring to the fact that it weighs in at 210 mins and is part one of a trilogy. Much as I appreciate the film has a "message" to get across, there really is not the need for every conversation to become a pivotal speech. It is really hard work. After a bit it reminds me of some of those old poorly made musicals, You know the sort, the conversation slows and you think "oh no, here comes another lame song". Well they don't sing, but boy do they carry on!!

Bonus side, it's well filmed, the fight scenes are good if a littleold fashioned (you know what I mean, like the old westerns "bang bang" and they fall down dead) But I got thru it and I will watch it again. Mind you, I can be a bit of a masochist my missus tells me.

Gotta rush, lives and jobs to save don't you know.

We'll speak more next time.

Till Next Time

ALL THE TIRED HORSES

(How'm I s'posed to get any collecting done?)

BY MARK CARTER

I believe a question was posed within these pages a couple of months ago as to whether the Dylan axis was beginning to slow down. I would suggest that, as far as the collecting axis is concerned, this is probably the case, although I can only speak from the experience of my (admittedly somewhat limited) trading circles. Even so, those trading circles were pretty active a few years ago and now - though part of the reason may be my own inertia - they are as sluggish as an asthmatic ant carrying some heavy shopping (if in doubt, always pinch a line from Blackadder or some such).

Partly, this may well be because collecting Dylan shows has lost much of its thrill. 95% of the set lists are more of the same ol' same ol' and, though he may drop in the occasional Senor or Desolation Row, these are hardly rare enough - or obscure enough - to warrant anything that even resembles excitement. True, there was one show recently - the Ongo Bongo Festival, or whatever it was - where he pulled at least four obscure covers out of the bag and immediately made this probably the only show of the year that will be essential to acquire, but, for the most, he seems to be following a tried and tested path and, though I only have one show so far, I fear that if I was to hear the 2004 versions of I Believe In You or Saving Grace I wouldn't be able to prevent myself from comparing them to those magnificent 1979/80 performances and find them somewhat wanting in the vocal presentation department (though I realize that this is my problem and not Bob's).

And therein lies the other problem - and probably the greatest cause for our apathy - the voice has gone completely. Not exactly an exclusive, I know, but there's no escaping the painful truth; the once wonderful voice that could transform the most banal and mundane of songs into a thing of beauty - Knocked Out Loaded excepted - has been reduced to a emotionless and expressionless rasp. We know it and Dylan knows it, but he still seems determined to continue to circumnavigate the globe with the remnants of it while he can, before it finally gives up the ghost and leaves him sounding like the Wicked Witch of the West's somewhat more cackling older brother. What he will do then - if anything - is interesting to speculate, but I shan't do so here. It's possible, of course, that he'll never concede that his singing voice is way beyond its sell-by date and it's more than possible - nigh on inevitable, I'd say - that there'll always be an audience willing to shell out their money just to see him, though how large this audience will be in, say, ten years time is open to debate. Mind you, we were probably saying the same thing back in 1994. I guess younger generations will continue to discover his music and will be more than happy to troop off to see him, even if the Bob Dylan of their Highway 61 and Blonde On Blonde CDs is not the same Bob Dylan as the Stetson-wearing, shadowy apparition hunched behind an inaudible keyboard that they're going to get. Bob, for his part - who said as far

back as 1984, whilst in the middle of lighting up another Marlboro or Lucky Strike, that "nothing can affect my voice, it's so bad" - will quite possibly happily (sic!) continue to churn out the oldies while he has bums on seats and nothing better to do. Meanwhile, those of us with longer memories will recall greater times and greater shows - even if we weren't there for them - and mourn what we have lost. It's scary to think that, here in 2004, we now recall the halcyon days of 2002 when he could still at least carry a melody. A bit. On a good day. What's scarier still is the thought that, come 2006, we may be harking back to this year's shows with an equally fond memory ("remember the 2004 European tour when he didn't just speak **all** of his lyrics?!").

All of which leaves me somewhat struggling to maintain enthusiasm. I note with a certain degree of sadness that there have been two or three books published this year that, at one time (and not all that long ago), I would have snapped up. These days I realize that I probably won't read them and that I don't really have the shelf space to file them. I'm not going to any of the shows this year because...oh, I don't know. Because it kind of feels **right** not to go. I suppose part of it is that same inertia again -it's easier not to go than it is to go, and my excuse that the money could be better spent on our summer holiday is genuine - we don't have an unlimited budget - but I suppose I could afford it if I really wanted to go. What it boils down to, I suppose, is the feeling that I simply don't want to go and see Bob half hidden behind his keyboard with his hat obscuring his face, standing extreme stage left while my seat faces extreme stage right. And I don't really want to hear High Water or Tweedle Dee And Tweedle Dum or Stuck Inside Of Mobile get mangled one more time whilst yet another audience - comprised of teenagers who don't know any better and older people who at least should - cheer him on in a Pavlovian frenzy.

I am saddened by all of this because I don't think I ever envisaged myself as being in this position. Back in, say, 1983, I would have been horrified to even contemplate a time when I didn't want the latest books or shows, let alone a time when the thought of attending a Dylan concert depressed me more than the thought of not going. To blame this state of affairs entirely on the - by and large - diminishing returns of Dylan's live shows is, of course, untrue and unfair, and my excitement and enthusiasm for, say, Love And Theft, Masked And Anonymous and the oft-mentioned (by me, at least) 'Cross The Green Mountain is as great as it was for Infidels, Oh Mercy and Time Out Of Mind. So I have no real idea what brought it on, whether it will remain, whether it will get worse or better. Some of it might be parenthood; some of it might be a need to make space at home and maybe some of it might be my rediscovery a couple of years ago or so of how much other wonderful music - both new and old - by other artists that there is out there, so much so that nowadays I would rather hear some of that than practically any Dylan show from 1990 onwards.

You may be wondering, not unreasonably, why I'm hanging on in there. Why do I keep contributing to Freewheelin' when my enthusiasm is waning and when I can't even think of an amusing cartoon at the moment? Well, good question, and I think the answer would be that - besides being an entertaining read -I have no wish to sever all links and Freewheelin' is still the only place where I can write and draw what I want and know that it will have an audience. How large - or interested - that audience is these days, I have no idea, but I would probably write and draw pretty much the same things anyway, either for my own pleasure or for some Dr.Who fanzine or something (though obviously I'd have to tone down the Dylan content somewhat and concentrate a bit more on Cybermen, Omega and the terrible Zodin). Then again, I rushed out to buy Live 1964 on

the day of its release, despite having owned it for years on at least three bootlegs, and still read *Isis* and *The Bridge* from cover to cover as soon as they plop through the letterbox. If Dylan were to release a new studio album every year and a volume of *The Bootleg Series* every month, then I'd snap them up without complaint. Even if he were to become a movie star and make a new film every year or so, then I'd dutifully stand in line, or - a more likely scenario, I would think - buy the DVDs. Unfortunately (for me), Dylan has chosen to become a non-stop touring artist and it's that which, little or much, no longer really excites me. As the Neverending Tour rushes ever onward towards its 20th birthday, I worry that the toll that it's taking on what little is left of his voice will dissuade him from making more albums because it's too limited to sustain a 60 or 70 minute CD of a dozen or so songs. That would be a shame because he clearly still has the knack of knocking off a work of genius when the spirit moves him.

The other reason why I'm hanging in there is because Bob Dylan now represents 43 years of creativity and most of those years still interest me and enthrall me as much now as ever. Just because the 2004 Bob Dylan is, as far as I'm concerned, one model off the conveyor belt too many doesn't mean that, say, 1975 Bob Dylan, or 1978 Bob Dylan or January/February 1990 Bob Dylan isn't still wonderful, or that the 1966 *Ballad Of A Thin Man* footage isn't still spine-tingling, or that *Hard Rain*, *The Letterman* show and the *Nara City Great Music Experience* doesn't represent some of the greatest live footage by any performing artist ever. All it means is that I've reached a point where, if I were writing Dylan's life story, I'd borrow a tip from Spitz and Shelton and write "after the release of *Love And Theft*, Dylan continued to tour a lot."

If following Dylan is like following Jesus, in that "ya either got faith or ya got unbelief, and there ain't no neutral ground" and "he who is not for me is against me", then I guess Dylan has drawn his line in the sand and I'm standing there with one leg raised, ready to plant my foot one side of the line or the other. Could go one way, could go the other.

Watch this space.



MEANWHILE...TWO WEEKS LATER

BY MARK CARTER (AGAIN!)

Since writing the article you have just (hopefully) read, I've received a few more 2004 USA shows and have listened to them carefully, lest I should be accused of writing current Bob off without enough proof to strengthen my convictions (it wouldn't be the first time, though I have never - to my knowledge, at least - been less than positive about any current Bob without first having enough proof to satisfy myself that my opinion is valid).

I have to say that I have heard nothing to allay my initial fears that his voice has deteriorated horrendously even since the end of last year and has certainly deteriorated a frightening amount since the turn of the century. Whether it's because of this that he seems to be structuring these shows more towards straight out rock 'n' roll, I don't know, but it does seem as though his voice is only now really comfortable when he's attacking Cry Awhile, Tweedle Dee And Tweedle Dum or even a pretty impressive Get Out Of Denver (but the less said about his and Jack White's take on Ball And Biscuit the better, hey?). The rare occasions when he does undertake a ballad or something that requires less than a hoarse, phlegmy shout seem special when they work and pitiful when they don't. The most interesting thing about the whole tour - to my ears and mind - is the radical rearrangement of It Ain't Me Babe; a rearrangement that conjures up memories of the audacity of the 1975 revamp of the same song. Of course, it's not in the same league as that but it's a step in the right direction and proves that - whatever else is lacking in 2004 - his willingness to reinvent and keep things slightly fresh remains at least partly intact.

I enjoyed the shows more than I expected - but, then, I did not really expect to enjoy them at all - and Bob did not seem to be coasting as much as I'd heard from some quarters, but unfortunately I heard very little that made me want to listen to them again. I'll file them on the shelf with all of the others, and I'm glad I've got them so that I at least have an indication of how a Bob show sounds and runs in 2004, but I don't feel the need to get any more and, if anything, the notion that I did the wisest thing in missing the recent UK tour is only reinforced. I've heard various reports about some of those shows; some suggest they were

excellent, others that they were so-so and others still that they were pretty dire. I guess you pays your money and you takes your choice.

As I said - and Dylan would hate reading this - Bob Dylan the Legacy far outweighs and overshadows 2004 Bob Dylan. What keeps me interested is that very legacy -plus the odd newsworthy story such as his recent "damned if you turn up, damned if you don't" St. Andrews University Doctorate appearance (about which you will read more in a future 20 Pounds) or the Victoria's Secret furore which was a godsend for 20 Pounds and allowed me to foam at the mouth at length (again, you'll read it in a future 20 Pounds soon enough, but, in case you're wondering, **I was on Bob's side**) - and, let's face it, there's enough work contained within that legacy to sustain me for a long while to come.

Acquiring our own PC (at last!) at the beginning of the year has meant that I'm enjoying writing these articles - and especially 20 Pounds - more than I ever have before. It's also given me the impetus to start getting down in black and white some of the stories and ideas that I've carried about for so long that don't - or won't - lend themselves to the cartoon format. Whether anything will come of it, who knows, but I work with a guy who publishes his own fiction, as well as that of others, and perhaps there will be a chance to do something completely different. Last year, he came second in some prestigious Fantasy Author Award (or something) in London - and even beat Stephen King in the process! - so if just a little of his luck and/or talent rubs off onto me, then I'll be quite pleased. I don't expect to be able to ever give up the day job but I've been cartooning on and off all my life - and almost constantly for Freewheelin' for nigh on 20 years - and I fear that I might finally be running out of ideas and, anyway, the change will do me good.

On the other hand, a cartoon can sometimes speak a million words, so you're not off the hook yet, Bob!



The Streets of Rome

from Trev Gibb

"The streets of Rome are filled with rubble,
Ancient footprints are everywhere.
You can almost think that you're seein' double
on a cold, dark night on the Spanish Stairs"

When I Paint My Masterpiece - Bob Dylan



I had a wonderful time in Italy and returned home yesterday night. In two weeks I travelled from Genoa to Cinque Terre, then from La Spezia to Rome, to Florence, Venice and finally home from Treviso airport on Wednesday, spending a few days at each place and even squeezing in a day in Pisa. I even considered travelling to Slovenia for a day, but that never materialised. Italy is a wonderful place. I was shocked at how reasonable transport is there. Their infrastructure isn't as slim line, or as superficial as ours appears, its practical however, it actually works

-unlike our own - in general their transport is much more reliable and reasonable than our own, such a different country, time is nothing, there's no rush....

Rome was such a culture shock for me, walking round in the ruins of the past, greatness fallen, seeing people worshipping graveyards of fallen glory taking photographs. Photographs on one level mean nothing... I wrote to a friend during my trip: "I'm trying to take pictures, but what does a photo really mean? It's the memory of an event personalised and immortalised in the mind that counts, the poetic images you gather and make your own from as opposed to the pictures of a moment gone by. Remember thinking it happened, that it existed as opposed to trying to prove to yourself with a photograph. Some things have to be felt and experienced on a profound level and a Photo can never do that justice. Photographs can make ghosts of people, they can take away the magic of an experience, "look where I've been, see this photograph here?" does it really matter in the end? Isn't that a failure of our own vanity? ... I absorbed so much that a photograph didn't matter. Either way I do have photographs, though I felt that I was betraying the beauty of what I was seeing, somehow 'taking' from it instead of 'investing' something of myself in seeing it, seeing hundreds of people scattered across the monuments in Venice, or Rome or Florence taking photographs and touching, making their own empire from the dust of old. Seeing all of those remnants of time and decay is just something completely beyond words and sentence....

I'm still a bit sunburnt, but even at the time it didn't matter, the culture and what I was able to scramble from the massiveness of it seeped so far into me that I felt no aches and pain. All I did was walk, the sun on my back, streets ahead... Echoes of ghosts on the streets of Rome, Florence and Venice, wandering all the way up the Spanish Steps, round the forum, the coliseum, throwing coins in the Fontana di Trevi.. Yes, and maybe I will return one day...

There's only one place that gave me that same magic feeling I felt when in Rome and that's NYC. But Rome... Rome is far more authentic and much closer to the soul somehow, not dazzled by the sparks of electric suicide at Times Square or the falling of autumn leaves in Greenwich village, but feeling the past so close to my own skin, but feeling the sublime, lost in a daze, wandering through ancient footsteps and ghosts of previous times back through the streets of Rome and happening upon The Pantheon...but the decay, the faint suggestions of what it once was, there in all its grandness, the faded beauty, the beauty of decay indeed.. it was something else, beyond the words I know, beyond everything, beyond definition, somewhere deep within the mystic. Falling asleep in the park, blue skies above, mythology scattered like leaves across the city and across my mind.

Seeing the balcony where Mussolini gave his speeches was surreal, I wish I'd been there all those years ago, I'd have thrown my reality right at him... Piazza Venezia, tribute to the greatness and glory of Italy and the Italian people? I'm not so sure, beautiful nonetheless.. A Tribute to Mussolini's great egotism, perhaps.

Florence like Rome was a beautiful city, yet its beauty was one that had to wash over you. It took me time to adjust to it in that sense, we went on a quest to discover which parts of the city had been used in the film Hannibal, and we found sketches, pieces, fragments... sad I know, but it was all part of the quest. Seeing the Cathedral - The Duomo, Santa Maria del Fiore - incredible, just incredible to see. Walking across the Ponte Vecchio and then up the hillside on the opposite side of the river seeing the whole panorama of the city, fallen below the horizon, coloured like rust,

browns and oranges and creams all faded into one - The Florentine Renaissance indeed.

Its so hard at this time to even pour out the experience, the views, my feelings on emotions are so awash with tiredness, the return to some form of normalcy is taking time and the recollections will be more fluid in time. But it was indeed a great trip. Venice was wonderful and St Marks square was magnificent, but there again everything was magnificent in its own individual way, the sunset on the rocks at Riomaggiore almost unspoiled by the outside world, the sunset behind the Ponte Vecchio, the echoes in the wind of faint yet many voices in the streets of Florence as night time fell, that same echo finding its way through the winding side streets of Venice, on Gondolas, flickering through the candles as we ate dinner in one of the ristorante's. Venice like nothing else, sinking into the lagoon, its culture hijacked by tourism and re-enacted carnival, something false was in the air, yet the majesty of what used to be and what should be somehow overpowered this. I didn't ride a Gondola because the magic wasn't there, the guys offering the canal trips were sprinkling glitter on dust instead of being true to their profession and to their own culture.. Either way Venice was wonderful, on the first day happening upon a guy sitting on the steps of a church playing Elizabethan ballads on guitar was surreal. He looked like he'd come from another time and his soul poured through the music, it was genuine, really beauty. The final night, tired, no, exhausted finding our way back to the station we overheard trickles of Vivaldi blagged our way into a Classical music concert; how we managed it I don't know, but wow! We went inside and took our seats, the music echoing across the room, the splendour of every painting on every wall, the way the light touched it in that moment making it special and different the moments and moment-less that followed every stroke of the cello, every murmur of the harpsichord... every statue standing the test of its own structure and every melodic note of the violin weaving and seeping through the grandeur of the surroundings it found itself in.

We left the following day, ears buzzing, eyes in crazy vision, "Train wheels runnin' through the back of my memory", magic restored if only for a few days before becoming part of the deceived once more...

"...someday everything is going to be different when I paint my masterpiece".

Last Thoughts on Bob Dylan

by Bob Fletcher

Well, I ride on a mailtrain, baby

A note of caution: any resemblance to people either living or dead is purely intentional.

It is a habit of mine to begin with a simple idea and then complicate things. The plan was to ask a cross section of people to write, in 25 words, what Bob Dylan means to them and it really ought to have been straightforward. I should never have made the mistake of assuming that participants would understand my attempt at parody and have therefore found myself explaining the Woody Guthrie connection to several bemused, indeed befuddled, would be contributors (I am still doing it three weeks later). Mind you, I was unaware that the idea had been tried before (after a fashion) and some real stinkers already existed, perfectly formed and in print. The following is the most perverse. Rolling Stone, when reviewing Blood on the Tracks, offered this: “The two best songs ‘Tangled Up....’ and ‘Simple Twist...’ might have been better than anything he’d done if his band had offered him decent support.” (In order to illustrate the 25 word connection I took out ‘in Blue’ and ‘of Fate’. Editing I confess, but necessary and excusable I trust). To further confuse the original issue, when one of the would be contributors is the author Alan Moore the story, as you would expect, hurtles in the direction of surreal at an alarming pace.

Depending on your viewpoint, technology offers endless possibilities or, in the words of Bob Dylan, ‘too much of nothing’. I am computer literate to a point. I have yet to Insert Hyperlink, discover a valid reason for the existence of Powerpoint, or utilise Clipart. The process involved in each remains a mystery and, if truth be told, I have yet to find myself in a life threatening situation requiring enhanced levels of computer literacy in order to survive. Email has its uses as will become obvious. However, as with all things there is of course a down side (‘behind every beautiful thing there’s been some kind of pain’). For a majority of messages sent there is an assumption that a response will be forthcoming. This is best illustrated using an analogy of sorts. The difference between the Philharmonic concert of 64 and Manchester Free Trade Hall in 65 is all about response (the quality of the recording also plays a large part). ‘If You Gotta Go’, when performed *with* the audience is magical. The laughter is spontaneous and we, the listener, become involved. Without the audience, albeit with the quality of a soundboard feed, the song doesn’t seem to contain the same joy. The performance is enhanced by the audience enjoying themselves. By the same token this article flounders without the thoughts of others.

It all began on, what appeared to be, an uneventful morn. I had taken a client to a café (I don’t believe that a dependency on alcohol, his not mine, should be hidden from public

view). By coincidence, or chance if you prefer, Barry Hale – Film Maker: **‘Dylan (Thomas) understood how radio could radically change the voice of poetry and how we experience it. Apparently another Dylan wrote Jimi Hendrix’s best song’** was sitting at the table next to me. We talked briefly, I requested his help, and we exchanged email addresses. Except his business card contained a web site, a mobile number, and a pleasing design. For all I know it could tell the time as well. As evidenced above, Barry dutifully supplied me with his thoughts along with the following advice: ‘Alan Moore would best be contacted in person in the café or by phone but I don’t know if 25 words would be enough’. And therein lay the first problem. The message assumed that I knew which café to go to. I replied asking Barry for clarification. The name was forthcoming along with the following instructions: ‘I would suggest being in the town centre for about 4.30 every day – probably in Abington Street – making your way to Gold Street – that’s pretty much his routine’. Barry helpfully ended with ‘I don’t know his email address but you could write to him – if only I could remember what street he’s in’. I had my vision; I’d just have to wait for Johanna.

In the meantime a colleague provided me with the email link for the Houses of Parliament and a pleasant surprise awaited. Tony Clarke – MP Northampton South: **‘A modern day Guthrie speaking of love, religion, war, poverty and discrimination is Zimmerman a Poet, Rock Star? Wordsmith, Musician? Or just a story teller?’** informed me that life in his London flat wouldn’t be the same without some Dylan. All I’ve got to do now is to convince Tony to bamboozle the floor by including at least five lyrical references during Prime Ministers questions.

As I’m sure all of you are aware, the mere mention of Bob Dylan elicits a reaction. Recently I was discussing all things Dylan with a colleague. A third person joined and commented on his singing, his age, his talent etc etc. She finished by suggesting that Brian Ferry’s performance of Hard Rain was superior. There was little point in arguing. Over many years I have become immune to the negativity of others. Two nights ago I listened to ‘Dylan’, the 1973 release, (much derided at the time but, in the context of the New Morning and Self Portrait sessions, indispensable) and thoroughly enjoyed it. Listen to ‘Spanish is the Loving Tongue’ and I defy you not to smile.

When choosing contributors I was conscious that several shared my passion. Colin Bishop – Dylan fan and ’66 witness: **‘A singer and poet who opened my eyes and widened my appreciation of other art and artists. He is up there with Joyce and Kerouac’** seemed an obvious choice. His daughter Angie had informed me that Dad had been a close friend of John Green and had played no small part in introducing him to the ever changing world of the Dylan collector. During a conversation with Angie she talked of many fond memories, including the occasions she would spend at the Green household. She would sit with John’s mum whilst the boys shut themselves away doing what Dylan fans do (it would appear that one of the things they did do was plot John’s first live experience of Dylan in 1981).

Mark Refoy – Singer/songwriter and guitarist with Slipstream and occasionally the Pet Shop Boys: **‘Hibbing skinny Judas Jesus bleeding sweet Woody Woodstock words**

that don't chart smash, motorcycle crash, Beatle hash, Minnesota flash, never ending bash, Don't Look Back' was flattered to be asked for his contribution. I, in turn, was flattered to be asked for my opinion regarding his latest songs. Mark is a long time friend. I grew up with his family and Mark was, without doubt, a role model. He showed me kindness and shared his passion for music.

Whilst discussing the article Mark informed me that he had a contact number for Alan Moore (I suspect there ought to be a dramatic moment here) but after much debate I felt unable to intrude on his privacy. Besides, Mark had a much better idea -trust in the hand of fate. I suspect Bob himself would approve.

A work related visit to a colleague in Kettering led me to Gordon King – Dylan appreciator and Dobro owner: **' 12 years old, Corby 1978, Baby Stop Crying. Start of the long journey from Desire to that jacket on Empire Burlesque! Humanity in all its complexities'** who, by a convoluted coincidence is a very good friend of Wilky – keeper of the flame: **'the grace with which the phrases rise unbidden to the mind. Offering elucidation not instruction. Priest of no fixed faith. 'don't follow leaders' above all'** (known to some of you as he has attended the Cambridge Bob Dylan Society meetings on more than one occasion). I couldn't help but notice a picture of Dylan behind Gordon and by the end of a very pleasant hour I had loaded his computer with various Dylan related sites. Since that first meeting I have passed on several bootlegs (or field recordings as I believe they are now referred to) and Gordon reports a newfound spring in his step.

A week has passed since I spoke with Mark Refoy and fate is nowhere to be seen. Neither for that matter is Alan Moore. I have, therefore, had plenty of time to reflect.

Sometimes I wonder whether the articles I write actually involve Bob Dylan – I'm sure he doesn't think he's involved in the slightest – I suspect the articles actually say more about me. But by listening to Dylan on a daily basis I have begun to understand just how much his work influences me. So I tell myself don't think twice. It's alright for me to acknowledge as much. He is a significant part of my life. (I doubt that my long suffering wife shares the same feelings, however she does claim to like Desire).

For the vast majority of us ideas are important. Unfortunately, unless we remember them, they go as quickly as they came. I have a shelf filled with scraps of paper and a Dictaphone full of ramblings spoken by somebody pretending to be me. Death returned to my thoughts and, momentarily, led me to believe that failure to achieve my goal (finding Alan Moore) signified not just the passing of an idea but a premature end to this piece. However, it wasn't quite as simple as that.

A previous article embraced death in particular, and my thoughts in general. Which got me thinking. Considering that the average funeral (or at least the ones I've been to) lasts around 25 minutes (which after the talking would leave time for three pieces of music at most) I began to consider what might appear alongside 'Hallelujah, I'm Ready To Go'. This should not be seen as a challenge and I do not expect fellow contributors to compile

lists. It is also entirely probable that today's choices will be replaced should the mood take me. As I write I am listening to 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue' from Prague (11th March, 1995). Andrew Muir understandably refers to the performance as one which "stands with anything Dylan has ever done....like seeing a precious diamond being held at an unfamiliar angle under a new light, revealing yet more depth and beauty to an already treasured gemstone". I bought a copy, along with The Genuine Never Ending Tour at a recent record fare and find both bewitching. The third choice, for purely personal reasons (what other reasons could there be) is 'A Hard Rain's a Gonna Fall' (the Great Music Experience, Nara, Japan 22nd May 1994). Andrew Muir recalls "being near tears as The Voice – which had seemed lost forever – returned in all its full, expressive, raging glory". Q magazine kept it brief: "Dylan resurgent – His Bobness wows Japan".

At the recent John Green day I actually happened upon Andrew Muir discussing an article of his. At one point Andrew spoke of the historical and factual inaccuracies contained within Hurricane and illustrated several examples. I was not alone in contributing to the discussion that followed. I was, and still am, of the opinion that Dylan doesn't use specific stories in the same way as others. He fills the entire canvass but hides within it the picture he wishes to exhibit. By discovering the finer detail we are invited to rethink and revise our original opinion. Paul Williams, when discussing 'Good As I Been to You' would appear to agree: 'Every song a painting. Every painting filled with light, and full of details that become visible at different moments, on different listenings'. By way of example I offer The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll (one of Dylan's most beautiful 'protest' songs). I suspect Dylan was fully aware that the actions of William Zanzinger were a contributing factor (he did hit her with his cane) but she did not die as a direct result of the blow. However, Zanzinger was an integral part of a culture which thought nothing of discrimination and believed wholeheartedly in apartheid. Therefore, Zanzinger (albeit not alone) killed the spirit of Hattie Carroll on a regular basis.

The 1960s were, amongst many other things, a shameful decade. At the trial of those accused of murdering James Chaney, Mickey Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman (3 civil rights activists) proceedings were overseen by Judge William Cox, a fiercely pro segregationist. The all white jury (where have you heard that phrase before?) found seven defendants guilty but allowed the Sheriff to go free. Passing sentence on two the Judge was quoted as saying "They killed one nigger, one Jew and a white man – I gave them all what I thought they deserved". What he thought they deserved was 10 and 7 years respectively. Should you be in any doubt that such opinions remain, and indeed flourish, I would recommend 'Ice Tea with Elvis', Nick Middleton's poignant observations on the current plight of the marginalized African Americans and an article from The Observer entitled Terminate With Extreme Prejudice (13 June 2004). I am in no doubt that I will never be told by Rubin Carter whether he did or didn't commit the crimes for which he was found guilty. That, however, is not the point. I understand (I think) what Dylan is suggesting. The event itself is of limited importance; the wider picture contains the full story. John Bauldie offered this when discussing 'Walls of Red Wing': "...in reality Red Wing is nothing like the Gothic fortress depicted here. Of course, reality is irrelevant to the song, which is an imaginative exercise in summoning up the horrors of what incarceration in such a place could be like". By coincidence, the following arrived as I

was writing. Jon Philpot – Dylan collector and travelling companion (of mine, not Dylan): **‘dylan is like the greatest novel ever written, you read it constantly, cover to cover continually finding new chapters and stories that compel and inspire’**

For a number of reasons, not least the Freewheelin deadline, today had to be the day. Emboldened by a live version of Highlands (Feel like I’m drifting, Drifting from scene to scene) and later by a poignant Dignity (Searchin’ high, searchin’ low, Searchin’ everywhere I know) I set off to confront fate and hopefully Alan Moore at the same time. Events took a bizarre twist and then, well, everything went from bad to worse. I made my way to Abington Street and passed some time with various Big Issue sellers, one non-heroin user (currently abstinent), three heroin users (currently active) and Nic, who works in a record shop and continues to marvel at my obsession.

At 4.30 Alan Moore remained elusive so I decided to visit the café. He wasn’t there either.

There is a phrase, much overused, that annoys me. Window of opportunity is something you will never hear me say. However, when related to the fact that, on this particular day, time was running out (kids needed picking up, food needed eating) I had two choices. Give up or draw the curtains and hope that things may appear in a different light the next time I opened them. Giving up had a comforting feel to it, as did the sight of Alan Moore walking towards me. The feeling was somewhat different as he walked straight past me, apparently ignoring my greeting, and got in a taxi. Luckily the woman with him didn’t. No, she made her way to HMV as did I. Understandably she was suspicious of my approach but after an explanation that included Barry Hale (mutual acquaintance) and magazine (subject Bob Dylan) she agreed to pass on my number. Ominously, she warned me that Alan gets many requests for interviews (he declines) and is currently attempting to retire.

It would appear that he has achieved the latter. Eight days have passed and the phone has yet to ring. In truth I knew it would end this way. But writing this has provided me with a feeling of well being and besides Dylan taught me many years ago that not all stories have the ending we would expect – ‘Don’t say I never warned you when your train gets lost’. So by way of a conclusion I offer my own 25 words: **‘1966, Dylan freewheelin, saved. Changin’ another portrait before bringing legal mercy. Nashville blonde, basement burlesque, new blood shot down. Budokan Billy unplugged’** and the following digression: if you want a happy ending, well here it is. Tomorrow I’m going to Cardiff for my first live experience of 2004.

As for Dylan himself, what does he think? The answer of course is I don’t know. However my guess is that the cantankerous old bugger wouldn’t bother with 25 words when the following 17 would do: ‘I’m only Bob Dylan when I have to be, most of the time I can be myself’.

Go in peace.

THE MISSIONARY TIMES

I'M NOT THERE (2004)

(Down the street those dogs are barking).

by J.R.Stokes

It has only happened to me twice and probably won't ever happen again. They were two late evening phone calls. No emergencies involved though. Not matters of life or death. Worse things always happen at sea anyway.

Be all that as it may, I will probably take those two phone calls to the grave with me. Firstly, because the guys who made those calls took some time out to remember me when they shouldn't have been thinking about me at all; and secondly because those phone calls involve two major obsessions that have been part of my life for quite some time, namely Bob Dylan and his song 'If Dogs Run Free'.

The first phone call came during the evening of Tuesday 3rd October 2000. The caller was phoning on his mobile from the concert hall at the Zenith in Paris. Andrew Muir was in France on business and also taking in the Dylan's 16th (out of 18) show on his late European tour. Just two days before, at Munster in Germany, Dylan had performed 'If Dogs Run Free' for the very first time live in concert. That particular song had become something of a jest between Andrew and myself because, on the one hand I had, for much more than a decade, been boring everyone silly about how this was my favourite Dylan song, and on the other hand, Andrew had just a couple of weeks before his phone call assured me that Dylan would never play this song live. Yet here it was in Dylan's set list for the third concert in a row. Andrew was excited that he had witnessed such a rare performance of the song and he came out of the auditorium straight away to tell me about it. He knew that, for some reason, the song meant a great deal to me and this was driven home when I also witnessed Dylan performing the song two nights in a row at Wembley Arena on the 5th and 6th October 2000. (I wrote about those performances in Freewheelin 182 - October 2000 – if anyone can remember that far back).

Dylan subsequently included the song in most of his shows in the States during November 2000 and in 2001 he performed the song a total of 55 times. My favourite Dylan song didn't however fare so well in 2002 – it was only performed some 9 times,

the last (after a gap of 3 months) being on August 9th 2002 at a venue called Saint John in New Brunswick, when 'If Dogs Run Free' followed a somewhat rare (for 2002) performance of 'Visions of Johanna'. As I was in the middle of my epic study of this latter song at the time, the set list was just a little spooky for me.

That, I thought, was that. It seemed that Dylan's dallying with my 'Dogs' was well and truly over because throughout 2003 the song wasn't performed at all. As there seemed to be a beginning, middle and end, I had this notion of collecting every live version of the song. Sadly, I haven't got round to that yet!

Then, getting on towards 4 years later, came that second phone call. It was during the evening of Friday 18th June 2004 and the caller was phoning on his mobile from the International Arena, Cardiff, Wales. It was Dylan's first show of the year on British soil and John Nye had made the 200 plus mile trip from Cambridge to Cardiff with a mutual friend namely Chris Rolph. Because of holidays, distance and work commitments I couldn't get to the gig but John gave me a flavour of what was going on when he held his mobile towards the stage where Dylan was performing... 'If Dogs Run Free'. What a bastard! Not John, not Dylan, but me for not being there. What a stupid bastard for not making the effort. I should have known better.

So the 2004 UK set lists started to become something of a nightmare for me. I wasn't going to any of the shows and how many 'Dogs' would I miss? Well, as it turned out, I didn't miss any because Dylan didn't perform the song at any of the other UK shows. At Gallway in Ireland on the 27th June he performed 'If Not For You' and 'The Man in Me' – but there was no New Morning hat trick, so I breathed a sigh of relief.

The next day, 28th June we were off to Italy for a fortnight, staying at the Adriatic coastal resort of Guilianova. I knew that Dylan was performing some concerts in Italy during the time of our stay but again, because of other commitments, (including to my wife who didn't want my obsession to interfere with our holiday for more than it had to), I didn't go to any of the Italian shows.

The first show in Italy was on the 2nd July at the Villa Pisani, near Venice which was about the same distance from my holiday resort that Cardiff is from Cambridge. So Bob was again just up the road and I was again not there. And what do you think was the 6th song in his set list after a break of 8 shows with no 'Dogs'? Of course: 'If Dogs Run Free'. If Cardiff was a bastard! Venice was a double bastard!!

I can't really begin to explain why I get so hooked about Dylan singing 'If Dogs Run Free' in concert. Sometimes it seems like something of a curse on me, but probably no more than this whole Dylan thing sometimes seems like a curse: a dreaded preoccupation that keeps my eyes away from the path that I should be really be taking. So much time taken in pursuit of nothing at all, like chasing a feather which actually died when it was plucked from a bird. At other times it seems like something of a blessing that I should be continually reminded of my personal and profound involvement with that song. To try and make some sense out of my continued obsession with the song I looked back at the

article I wrote after I witnessed it being performed at Wembley in October 2000. This is what I then wrote:

‘I was ecstatic, nervous, overjoyed at hearing the song, but I was in the middle of 12000 people who appeared overjoyed too, no doubt for their own reasons. It was later, in my solitude, in my night thoughts when I could properly reflect on the meaning of it all. It was then that I realised that I was not yet ready to speak as a man, to understand as a man, to think as a man. I was not yet ready to put away those foolish things. Things like the utterly foolish notion that just one song could really make any difference to anyone; or the totally foolish thought that any importance whatsoever could be attached to three short verses and a spot of jazz; or indeed the very foolish idea that there could be any kind of connection between the performance of a song and any other particular set of circumstances. All such foolish, foolish things. Yet in my night thoughts I saw my beloved lost daughter Abigail and my dear departed friend John Green. To them I say : ‘Oh how the ghost of you clings’. And these foolish things? They remind me of you.’

And, do you know what? Getting on towards four years later, nothing has changed. I still get a jolt at the very idea of this song. I am clearly not done with it yet. And neither it seems, is Bob Dylan.

