

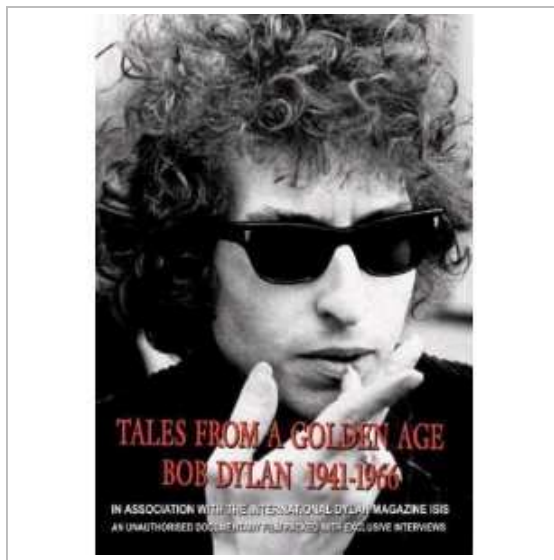
FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2010

DVD Review: Tales From a Golden Age: Bob Dylan, 1941-1966

Text © Robert Barry Francos/FFanzeen, 2010
Images from the Internet



Tales From a Golden Age: Bob Dylan, 1941-1966

No director listed

Narrated by Sian Jones

Chrome Dreams, 2004

86 minutes, USD \$21.95

Chromedreams.co.uk

MVDvisual.com

Along with the Beatles and Elvis, there has been such a large output of biographical material on Bob Dylan, can there be *anything* not said already? Well, honestly, I haven't read much on Dylan (I know I finished one reviewing all his live concerts), so please excuse the gaps of ignorance of previous material.

Well, for me anyway, what makes this so interesting is all the interviews, and there are a larger than usual number for this British television series in relation to just information. Part of what is amusing, though, is that there is not a piece of music or dialog by the

Blog Archive

▼ 2010 (134)

▼ November (5)

[DVD Review: Tales From a Golden Age: Bob Dylan, 19...](#)

[DVD Review: John Scofield: New Morning - The Paris...](#)

[DVD Review: Shonen Knife: Live at Mohawk Place, 20...](#)

[A Chief Whitecap Walk: Photo Essay](#)

[The FFanzeen Art of Alan Abramowitz](#)

► October (12)

► September (16)

► August (14)

► July (3)

► June (9)

► May (16)

► April (10)

► March (21)

► February (15)

► January (13)

► 2009 (78)

► 2008 (70)

► 2007 (22)

About Me

Robert Barry Francos
c/o 62 Timber Ridge Rd,
Commack, NY 11725. From 1977-88, I used to publish a music magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music

subject himself, but there is plenty of b-roll footage and photographs. The incidental music (guitar and harmonica) is written and performed by Amanda Thompson, in a Dylanesque manner.

As this was sponsored by the Dylan-focused British *ISIS Magazine*, and the documentary is a British production, it was obvious the information was going to be directed in a way that highlights his trips to that country, as it was after a certain point.

The documentary starts off, of course, with his birth in Duluth, Michigan, and then his family's move when he was a child to Hibbing, MN. There he meets a high school teacher who introduces him to poetry, and the ball is rolling. It's this opening part that I find the most interesting, as there is a 2004 interview with BJ Rolfzen, that teacher, as well as some of his classmates and school friends, such as Larry Fabbro, who was in Dylan's very first band (they played two songs in public). All the people who knew him then had the same descriptors: loner, quiet, not a lot of friends.

One aspect I wonder about is the amount of detail they remember about little Robert Zimmerman nowadays. I ponder about how much of that is actual, and how much is codified through the years of (a) knowing someone who became a celebrity much later on, and (b) on being interviewed through the years. Remembrances tend to solidify in memory until one is telling of the repeating of the memory rather than the memory itself. At least there is some consistency that runs through the re-re-re-telling.

Before there was Woody Guthrie, who made enough of an impression on Little Bobby Z that it turned him from Little Richard to interest the hobo life and music. By the time he moved to go to Minneapolis to attend college, and after playing in Bobby Vee's band for a short stint, he left the Zimmerman behind and came to the Dylan name, affecting a Guthrie accent (which was pretty much an affect in itself). As for the origin of the Dylan name, some state that he told them it came from Dylan Thomas, and others, such as *ISIS Magazine's* Derek Barker, claim it was from a television show, and was original spelled Dillon. That's one of the fun things about oral histories.

While in Minneapolis, he joins the folk scene there, befriending singer "Spider" John Koerner and mentor for that stage in his life, Dave Whitaker, both represented in interviews here (Whitaker looking and sounding a bit like Eugene Levy's character in *A Mighty Wind*). While the people from that part of his life achieved some kind of fame, they would be left in the dust, relatively speaking.

Supposedly, Dylan first came to New York to see a bed-ridden Woody, but ended up in Greenwich Village, and into the arms of Joan Baez. At the time, she was a more popular artist with a few albums under her, with Dylan using (innocently or not) her to further his own career. She was to him what Judy Collins was to Leonard Cohen: the way in.

scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). And the beat goes on.

[View my complete profile](#)

Tom Bingham's blog

[My recent photos](#)

[My photos of "The Day"](#)

[Jersey Beat magazine](#)

[Life and Blog of Gary Pig Gold](#)

[Lethal Dose by Donna Lethal](#)

[Blitz! Magazine: Mike McDowell](#)

[Tom Bingham's blog](#)

[G-Mole: Bruce Farley Mowat](#)

[Suburban Voice: Al Quint](#)

[Blog of Lance Strate of General Semantics/Media Ecology Association](#)

[Who Really Cares blog of Craig Davison](#)

Some proprietors of the clubs back then are represented here, such as Art D'Lugoff of the Village Gate (who first turned him down) and Paul Colby, owner of the Bitter End. We also hear from Woody's manager, but the biggest voice here throughout this entire documentary is British author Clinton Heylin, who wrote *Bob Dylan: The Man Behind the Shades*. However, the more famous name is British folk musician Martin Carthy (who owns an MBE). They explain how the British music influence was the strongest of Dylan's post-Guthrie period, pushing him from balladeer to his being a songwriter and his leading him to pursue his own burgeoning style.

I'm not going to bother repeating the history, which is gone over album by album, right up to his motorcycle accident just after the release of what many consider his masterpiece, *Blonde on Blonde*. That is the cut-off point of this DVD, but I would like to mention a couple of the other interviewees, such as Dr. CP Lee (listed as a "Dylanologist," whatever the hell that means), and drummer Mickey Jones, who played with the Hawks (who later became the Band) on the world tour of 1966, cut short by the crash. Jones' story of being on the road with a newly electrified Dylan and getting booed around the world is absorbing.

Because of all the printed works on Dylan, it was wise for the producers of this documentary to rely to this heavily on the interviews, since they could not get anything from Dylan himself. This makes it more of a unique document (don't eat it, though), and with a well-done storyline, the action is quick and the interest is kept. Whether there is anything new here, I'm not sure, but this was a pleasure.

Posted by Robert Barry Francos at [12:01 AM](#) 

Labels: [Bob Dylan](#), [DVD review](#), [FFanzeen](#), [Robert Barry Francos](#)

Reactions: interesting (0) cool (0) informative (0)

0 comments:

[Post a Comment](#)



Cambio.com

Ads by Google

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

Philadelphia Coupons

1 ridiculously huge coupon a day. It's like doing Philly at 90% off!

The Electric Factory

Philly's location for live music! Schedule and additional info below