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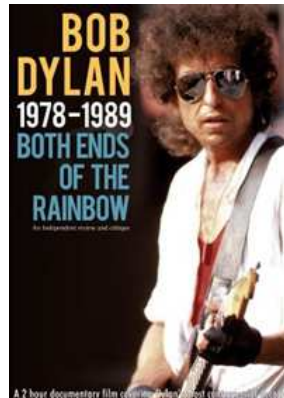
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Bob Dylan 1978-1989: Both Ends
of the Rainbow

Music Video Distributors

www.musicvideodistributors.com

This two hour documentary is independent critique/discussion of Bob Dylan's "Christian phase." The interviewees include Chuck Plotkin, producer of Shot of Love (second album in his Christian trilogy) and his first engineer Toby Scott, Chief engineer Josh Abbey from the Infidels and Empire Burlesque albums, Malcolm Burn, engineer of the Daniel Lanois produced Oh Mercy, collaborator/band leader Mark Howard from Empire Burlesque, rhythm section gurus Sly and Robbie from the Infidels album, and a handful of other notables close to the artist and his albums during this period of his career.

This has long been my favorite Bob Dylan era to examine and listen to. Dylan was transitioning his spiritual life during this time, not just his political views or musical styles, as he had done in the past. The whole feel of this era sonically is that of someone who had found himself but was trying to figure out how he now fit into his chosen career path. This is something a lot of people go through/are going through but it's rare to have such a high profile person make this transition so openly.

Of course, this begins with Dylan's classic Slow Train Coming album and slow spirals downward as far as critics and fan reaction go. The spiral comes to an end with the highly successful Oh Mercy album, which many consider a return to form for Dylan. I contend it is the musical culmination of an entire decade and is not that far from where he started with Slow Train Coming, it's just as pushy, it's just more subtle. Regardless of what I think, it's fascinating to see those "in the know" debate the ins and outs of this era. I was actually surprised to hear the semi-negative feelings towards Infidels and Empire Burlesque in particular as they are two of my favorite Dylan albums. Since I don't remember much about their release, I didn't realize there was quite so much animosity towards them, arguably spilling over from the in your face Christianity of Slow Train..., Saved, and Shot of Love.

As we all know, these documentaries can be very hit and miss. This one hits hard, firing on all cylinders throughout. The debate here is well thought out and edited together in a way that makes it flow in a very interesting way, resulting in a very natural feel. Of course, it's all conjecture like any documentary of this style but that makes the debate no less fascinating. I highly recommend this for any open minded Dylan fans out there.

Reviewed by Mark Fisher