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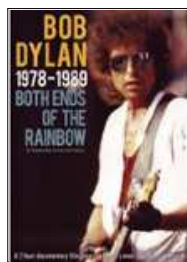
Bob Dylan 1978-1989 - Both Ends of the Rainbow (2009)

Video documentary explores Dylan in the 80s.

oppo
 Blu-ray Disc Player



Published on July 23, 2009



Bob Dylan 1978-1989 - Both Ends of the Rainbow (2009)

Production by Chrome Dreams
Studio: Pride
Video: 1:33:1 (4:3) color & B&W
Audio: English PCM Stereo
Extras: The Dylan Gospel interviews, Contributor biographies, Bonus disc with

extra interviews from the period
Length: 127 min. (Bonus disc: 68:40)
Rating: ****

The third in a series of documentaries put together by London's Chrome Dreams production company, *Both Ends of the Rainbow* chronicles the period from Dylan's conversion to Christianity in 1978 to his 1989 album, *Oh Mercy*. Featuring interviews with various critics, as well as musicians and producers that Dylan worked with during the period, the documentary delves into one of Dylan's most difficult periods artistically and commercially.

After seeing a vision of Jesus Christ in a hotel room in Tucson in 1978, Dylan became a full-fledged fundamentalist Christian, alienating a huge segment of his audience and seemingly becoming everything he had been railing against his entire career. (Though critic Anthony DeCurtis points out that there is little difference between dividing the world into the hip and the unhip and dividing it into the saved and the damned.) Starting with *Slow Train Coming* in 1979, Dylan released three overtly Christian albums, but as his album sales began to plummet, he

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started to downplay his religious faith. Throughout the 80s, he struggled to stay relevant, using reggae legends Sly and Robbie as his rhythm section on 1983's *Infidels*, enlisting New Order producer and famed disco remixer to engineer 1986's *Empire Burlesque*, and filling out his mixes with gospel backing vocals and Wall of Sound production methods.

With numerous insights from critics and interesting behind the scenes stories from session musicians and producers (*Shot of Love* producer Chuck Plotkin tells a great story about being a "human mic stand" during the recording of *Every Grain of Sand*), *Both Ends of the Rainbow* is sure to fascinate longtime Dylan fans, but those unfamiliar with this period of his career will be frustrated with the paltry number of songs featured in the film. Due to the fact that the documentary has not been authorized by Dylan, the snippets we do get to hear are mostly from concerts and music videos. Also, the bonus disc with interviews from the period can be quite frustrating to listen to, since Dylan often gives extremely banal answers to the questions posed.

Despite minor flaws, *Both Ends of the Rainbow* is still highly fascinating, and a much needed counterpart to the hagiography of a movie like *No Direction Home*.

-- Daniel Krow

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