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Category: Home > Reviews > Drama > Documentary > Music > Rock > Biography > I'm Not There (2007/Genius DVD) + Bob Dylan 1978 - 1989: Both Ends Of The Rainbow (MVD Under Review series)

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- > The Willow Tree (New Yorker Film DVD)
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I'm Not There (2007/Genius DVD) + Bob Dylan 1978 - 1989: Both Ends Of The Rainbow (MVD Under Review series)

Picture: C+ Sound: C+ Extras: B-/C Film: B-/B

There are so many sides to Bob Dylan, like any survivor, in part because there are so many eras, ideas (even contradictory ones) and a combination of legacy and influence that is being rediscovered for all kinds of reasons and in so many ways. He is one of the only artists to date to see most of his catalog issued in an audio format above old CDs (Sony issued most of his classics in fine two-channel SA-CDs) and he has made a critical and commercial comeback. Todd Haynes has decided to taker on a deep mediation of his early years in **I'm Not There** (2007) by having Dylan portrayed by several actors.

It is not to say that Dylan is schizophrenic or to say oversimplified things about persona and celebrity, but one thing we do come away with is that the world has still not caught up to Dylan at his peak, most innovative moments. Marcus Carl Franklin and Ben Whishaw play Dylan in good performances that are easy to overlook and the film runs into his problematic flirting with Born Again Christianity, speaking to a man who has taken such a profound life journey that he cannot be totally there at any one time and maybe we (to some extent) cannot either if we are really living. However, Dylan has gone further than most of us in this respect, which is why we still talk about him.

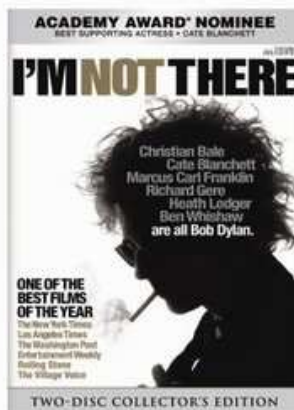
Four high profile actors also play Dylan, from the laid-back traveler of Richard Gere, around the time he started making movies, to early Dylan played with a sense of irony by the late Heath Ledger, to the aggressive Dylan played by Christian Bale. That leaves the peak performer Dylan played by Cate Blanchett. Now it is no secret that Haynes has a serious interest in the gay and lesbian image on film, openly gay and boldly, intelligently exploring these themes in an all-too-rare rich way. But when it comes to music stars, there is always a strange twist in his approach, including his use of the actors here.

The unreleased **Superstar** about The Carpenters used Barbie dolls to tell the story of the famous, popular singing duo, while not making it into a joke. Here, by using Blanchett, he gets to subvert overplayed footage of the peak Dylan by making the real-life Dylan's points and ideas pointed again and her performance shows that when you hide yourself, you do hide part of your sexuality to an extent that you can become asexual. It is an interesting thesis, reminds us that Dylan was a hit during Warhol's early peak and becomes the highlight of the film.

However, the film overall is uneven, as ambitious as it is. Whether it could have been better is hard to say as Haynes is going for an intentionally fragmented approach that has built-in issues. At 135 minutes, he gets into the problem of saying things only he means, but there may be no other way for him to do this and the film and its audience needs to pay with some down points. For Dylan fanatics, it may work better, but you should not need a scholarship on the singer to appreciate any film.

As an interesting comparison arriving on DVD at the same time, **Bob Dylan 1978 - 1989: Both Ends Of The Rainbow** is a bold look at the Born Again era of the singer and how it came at the worst possible time (the dawn of the Reagan era) and how he seems to have lost touch with so much by this point. There is some cheating on the timeline beyond 1989, but it is a rarely told or discussed period for the singer and is an examination long overdue.

The anamorphically enhanced 2.35 X 1 image is good at times, but the varying nature of the images are documentary like. Add the softness throughout most of the transfer and despite a fine job by Director of Photography Edward Lachman, A.S.C., this is not everything it could be. Hopefully, it will look better on Blu-ray. The 1.33 X 1 image on **Rainbow** is as varied, is



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- > **Gang Of Souls: A Generation Of Beat Poets (1989/MVD DVD)**
- > **Mariah Carey - The Adventures Of Mimi (Blu-ray Concert/Image Entertainment)**
- > **Cloverfield (Paramount DVD-Video)**
- > **I'm Not There (2007/Genius DVD) + Bob Dylan 1978 - 1989: Both Ends Of The Rainbow (MVD Under Review series)**
- > **Oban: Star-Racers - Volumes One & Two (Shout! Factory)**

often more colorful and oddly as sharp throughout. Both have Dolby Digital sound, with the 5.1 on the film dialogue-based and at its best when the music kicks in. The 2.0 Stereo on the documentary is as solid as it usually is for this series.

Extras on DVD 1 of There includes another good audio commentary by Haynes, introduction to the film and on-screen lyrics to the songs, while DVD 2 adds outtakes, deleted scenes, alternate/extended scenes, auditions, Haynes on-camera interview, Making The Soundtrack piece, Red Carpet Premiere, stills, extended text on Dylan and trailer gallery. Rainbow has contributor text biographies and Dylan Gospel interview.

For more on Bob Dylan, try these links:

Martin Scorsese's No Direction Home

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Dylan Speaks - The Legendary 1965 Press Conference In San Francisco

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