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Bob Dylan on DVD (Again)

Russell Carlson February 16, 2006

Wanna look at Bob Dylan in clown makeup and listen to him preach the gospels of Jeeeee-zus Keeeer-iste for a couple of hours? Highlights from and insights into two of the baffling bard's most bizarre periods (relatively speaking, of course) are coming to DVD April 4 as Bob Dylan 1975-1982: Rolling Thunder & the Gospel Years.

Beginning with an exploration of Dylan's 1975 Rolling Thunder Revue tour, during which Dylan performed in face paint and with a odd-lot assortment of folk musicians, the DVD focuses on the tour's final night at Madison Square Garden, a benefit show for wrongly convicted boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. Carter sits down for the first interview he's given in 30 years and tells the story of the Hurricane. There's additional footage explaining the maligned tour film, Renaldo and Clara, with commentary by Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Rob Stoner, Scarlet Rivera and others who also give an inside info on Dylan's Desire album.

But maybe you're more interested in Dylan's dabbling with Christianity? The second portion of the DVD covers Dylan's time spent as a saved man, beginning in 1978 and continuing through the making of his three gospel records. The interviews with Slow Train Coming producer Jerry Wexler, background singer Regina McCrary and keyboardist Spooner Oldham are great first-hand sources for director Joel Gilbert to have nabbed, but truly, it's the interview with Dylan's Bible class teacher, Pastor Bill Dwyer, that will make this one worth it.