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REVIEW

DVD Review: Bob Dylan - *The Golden Years 1962 - 1978*

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The Golden Years 1962 - 1978 is actually a two DVD collection that takes us through two different phases of Bob Dylan's career. The first phase is his life beginning with his childhood in Minnesota and takes us to the near fatal motorcycle crash in 1966. The second phase begins with the motorcycle crash and finishes in 1978; around the time of his religious experiences.

DVD 1 is entitled *Tales from the Golden Age: Bob Dylan 1941 - 1966*. This is the shorter of the two disks; running 86 minutes and it seems to have to reach the most to uncover information from the early days in Hibbing Minnesota. It was here the young Robert Zimmerman learned about Rock and Roll music and began playing it.

Even here Dylan worked under a non de plume using the name Elston Gunn; this was taken from the TV show Peter Gunn, according to the documentary. He had a high school band that he sang so loud in the principle had to cut off the microphone. He was also said to sing like Little Richard. In this DVD, they interviewed childhood friends and acquaintances as well as his High School English teacher.

The DVD then takes us through Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota on to New York where he cut his first Columbia Album *Bob Dylan* in 1962. We learn about his rise into the folk world and subsequent turmoil he created with the infamous 1966 world tour where he began his electric phase. It ends with the motorcycle crash that left him laid up in bed for 8 months with a broken neck.

DVD 2 is called *Bob Dylan 1966-1978: After the Crash*. This documentary picks up with Bob Dylan recuperating and hiding in Woodstock, New York. Here it is revealed through journalist and long time friend Al Aronowitz as well as with Nigel Williamson, *The Rough Guide to Bob Dylan*; and Clinton Heylin, *Behind the Shades*; that the motorcycle accident served as a wake up call to Dylan. He realized that he had to stop the roller-coaster.

This also served to be a motivational changer for Dylan. He spent more time with his family and his music took off in different directions than ever before. It was here that he experimented by merging the genre of country music with rock.

With the release of *Nashville Skyline*, Dylan, building off his last album *John Wesley Harding*, went mainstream country instead of the rural folk that many others of the day did. During this time he worked with friend and label mate Johnny Cash. It was during this time that they did some duets that are highlighted on this DVD.

The DVD takes us through, what could be considered two of Dylan's greatest albums; *Blood on the Tracks* which had a lot to do with his estrangement with his wife Sara, and *Desire* which contained his first successful protest song in twelve years.

The documentary describes the Rolling Thunder Review tours in 1975 and 76 as well as the four hour film that Dylan made called *Renaldo and Clara*. The DVD finishes up with the Bands' *The Last Waltz* and Dylan's *Street Legal*.

While these two DVD's are not authorized by Dylan and company, they clearly have insights from those who participated, or witnessed the times. From the perspective of historical accuracy, it is my opinion that it is through a combination of authorized as well as documentaries like this that one is able to glean a truer picture of the man and the times.

I found *The Golden Years 1962 - 1978* a thoroughly entertaining and interesting DVD for the Dylan fan as well as those who are interested in the musical history of Rock and Roll.

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