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Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan: The Golden Years 1962-1978 [DVD]

(Chrome Dreams) Rated: N/A
 US release date: 17 July 2007
 UK release date: 18 September 2006

by **Ryan Gillespie**

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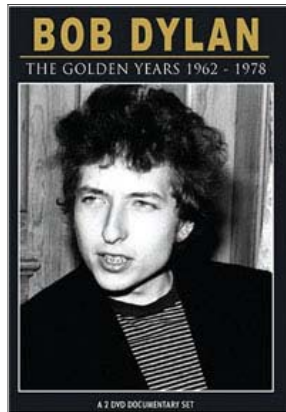
There are DVD sets, and then there are DVD sets. Unfortunately, *Bob Dylan: The Golden Years 1962-1978* falls into the former category.

Split into two discs (both previously available), the first entitled *Tales From a Golden Age, 1941-1966* and the second, *1966-1978: After the Crash*, the documentaries cover Dylan from childhood to the Greenwich Village folk scene to Newport, from the Basement Tapes to the Rolling Thunder Revue tour to his conversion to Christianity. But with no shortage of Dylan documentaries available (even *Don't Look Back* was re-released earlier this year), insightful footage, interviews, commentaries, and musical performances are very tough to come by in the 21st century.

The key word here is "insightful" and not, most emphatically, "novel". There are a host of novel interviews in this two-disc set produced in conjunction with reputable Dylan fanzine *Isis*, ranging from Larry Fabbro (a school friend who played in Dylan's first high school rock 'n roll band) and BJ Rolfzen (Dylan's high school English teacher) to the infamous AJ Weberman (the man who used to go through Dylan's garbage in search of "clues"). The measure of how insightful these interviews are into the man or his music is in direct correlation to one's Dylan fanaticism. However, the second disc does strike a better set of interviews, featuring segments with Jacques Levy, Scarlet Rivera, and Rolling Thunder Revue bandleader Rob Stoner, who provides the most interesting personal account and commentary in the entire package.

Another troubling facet of this set is the lack of Dylan source material. The first disc features no original Dylan musical performances (instead, sound-alike soundtrack music is employed) and, save for album artwork, precious few images, either. The second disc does slightly better, with a few clips from Dylan TV interviews and actual live footage, but all are previously released segments and performances (for example, clips from *Concert for Bangladesh* are used) and are never shown for longer than 30 seconds.

While it is perhaps unfair to compare an unauthorized documentary with authorized ones, the fact that this production failed to gain Dylan's blessing causes it to suffer. To listen to Martin Carthy talk about how "Girl From North Country" is a reworking of the British standard "Scarborough Fair" or to hear commentators wax poetic on masterpieces like *Highway 61 Revisited* but to then be left without the audio punch of the songs themselves rings shallow. This is, after all, an audio / visual presentation and not a book. Martin Scorsese's *No Direction Home*, while flawed in many ways, still had the enormous benefit of scores of rare Dylan images and lengthy performances, as well as the necessary staple classics, not to mention more, shall we say, famous, interview subjects (Joan Baez, Pete Seeger).



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There are indeed some positive aspects of *Bob Dylan: The Golden Years 1962-1978* beyond just trivial but fun details (e.g., the two songs Dylan played with his band in the high school talent show were "Jenny, Jenny" and "True Fine Mama", no doubt copped from Little Richard), but overall, more detailed information and better insights are found in the Dylan print library and more striking and unique audio and visual performances are found on other Dylan documentaries.

Dylan & Harrison perform at the Concert for Bangladesh

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— 2 August 2007

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Psalm 100 instructs, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!". What more joyful sound than the life-affirming song of protest, for that is the sound wrenched from the deepest grief and suffering, from exhausted and diseased lungs, and the voice raised in tuneful protest is among the most beautiful of human sounds. Sing out, indeed!

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[Review: Bob Dylan: Dont Look Back \(1965 Tour Deluxe Edition\) \[DVD\]](#)

Ryan Gillespie
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The digital remastering is noteworthy, but it's the "65 Revisited" bonus disc that makes this an entirely necessary upgrade for Dylan fans and essential viewing for film and music aficionados alike.



[Review: Bob Dylan: World Tour 1966: The Home Movies \[DVD\]](#)

Leigh H. Edwards
15.Mar.07

We learn perhaps too much about Jones's background, musical influences, and career. Obviously, we want more Dylan.

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