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Dylan Revealed DVD Review



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Dylan Revealed DVD

Credits: Joel Gilbert

Rating for Bob Dylan DVD:

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Joel Gilbert of Highway 61 Entertainment started out as a Bob Dylan impersonator, with his band Highway 61 Revisited. They were quite good as a Dylan tribute band, but in recent years Gilbert has parlayed his success into a movie production business, doing documentaries and generally demonstrating The Peter Principle. He produced "Bob Dylan Neverending Tour Diaries" which was mainly Dylan's ex-drummer Winston Watson telling various road stories and how he came to play with Bob, etc, which was a moderately interesting film for diehard Bob fans. For the average viewer, it was strictly snoozeville. Gilbert also produced the execrable and howlingly laughable "Paul McCartney Really is Dead," wherein Gilbert, with a straight face, claims to have received two audio tapes from England in which the narrator, claiming to be George Harrison on his dying hospital bed, tells the "real" story about McCartney and the "Paul is Dead" phenomena. The movie comes close to being a Monty Python-ish production worthy of some pretty good laughs, but then you realize it's supposed to be in earnest. I won't go into all the things that make this film one of the most amateurish and outlandish documentaries in recent history, a kind of Ed Wood worthy production, since there's plenty on the net about it. Gilbert is also a conservative

anti-Muslim tea party-type thinker, as his documentary “Atomic Jihad” as his blog listings on his “Family Security Matters” site demonstrate. Strange bedfellows indeed.

Anyway, this brings us to “Dylan Revealed,” Highway 61’s newest offering. All and all, it isn’t half bad. Gilbert’s rounded up a bunch of people who’ve known Dylan closely and all of whom have their own interesting personal things to say about him. The film is divided into sections – 1962/Time’s They are a Changin’ 1966 /World Tour (electric) 1967/Drug Rehab 1974/The Comeback 1975 / Rolling Thunder 1978/The Entertainer 1979/Busy Being Born Again 1990/Never Ending Tour. People from each time period comment on the Bob they knew, and there are some nice little bits of information that hasn’t necessarily been heard before. Nothing groundbreaking, but Ramblin’ Jack Elliot tells a few nice anecdotes from the Rolling Thunder times, notably a charming little bit about the first gig at Cape Cod, Massachusetts just south of Boston, playing a rehearsal/private concert for some elderly women who were having a Mah Jong tournament. Bassist Rob Stoner talks about how “Desire” was recorded, photographer Barry Feinstein talks about the 1974 comeback tour with the Band. Dylan’s Bible teacher during his born again period, Bill Dwyer, gives some insightful words on the man. Scarlett Rivera of the Rolling Thunder band (now of Highway 61 Revisited) tells how it was she came to meet and play with Dylan, which is a fascinating little tale. Rubin Carter talks about everything Bob did for him, and recounts the concert the Rolling Thunder band played in the prison where he was incarcerated, saying how Joni Mitchell called him a “jive-ass n.....” because he didn’t defend her when his fellow inmates, who didn’t care much for Joni’s music, booted.

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The only time you could say something is actually revealed - sort of - is when Barry Feinstein says he adamantly believes Dylan's motorcycle accident was a minor one, since he saw the motorcycle and it didn't look too beat up. He claims Dylan wasn't hurt badly, but used the accident as an excuse to get himself off the tour and free of drugs.

There's no Dylan music in the film, Gilbert couldn't get the rights to use it from Dylan's people apparently, or it cost too much, and so Gilbert's Highway 61 Revisited band plays some ersatz Dylan sounding stuff. The one howler in the film is when they're talking about the motorcycle accident, Gilbert shows a clip of himself, with his wiry Dylanish hair, riding a motorcycle in a blurry black and white clip that goes by in a few seconds and makes it look like he's just crashed.

This is a Dylan documentary for real fans only, but those fans will find little bits here and there that make it worth the price of admission. All and all, it's a guilty pleasure at best.



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William Routhier loves music, literature, dogs, honesty and kindness. Other things too, and not necessarily in any particular order. He writes for...

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