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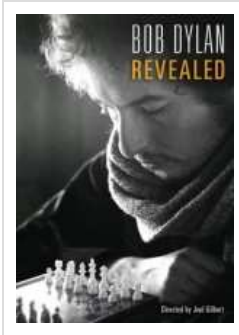
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Bob Dylan Revealed

Dir. Joel Gilbert

[Highway 61 Entertainment; 2011]

by **ANDREW EASTWICK**

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STYLES: alleged documentary
OTHERS: Paul McCartney Really Is Dead, Farewell Israel: Bush, Iran and The Revolt of Islam

LINKS: Bob Dylan Revealed - Highway 61 Entertainment

The amateur farrago that calls itself *Bob Dylan Revealed* doesn't deserve a critical appraisal, so consider this a consumer advisory. If I can spare one innocent person from spending time and money on this exploitation, I will have done my job.

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It's hardly surprising that the enigmatic Dylan is not "revealed" in this purported documentary, or that he doesn't appear except in familiar photos and film clips from the public domain. But it may come as a shock to fans that none of his music is heard — at least not in the form of his own recordings. Director Joel Gilbert, who admits guilt as director of this embarrassment, clearly couldn't secure the rights, which is why the music that buzzes incessantly on the soundtrack consists of instrumental-only approximations of Dylan's sound by Gilbert's tribute band, Highway 61 Revisited. Dylan's voice is heard only in archival interviews and spoken announcements from concert footage. The result is the cinematic equivalent of *Having Fun with Elvis on Stage*, the infamous album Colonel Tom Parker concocted out of Presley's between-song patter.

Gilbert has structured his film around whatever topics he could get his interviewees to talk about, which accounts for the jarring chronological leaps and lopsided pacing. The cheap-looking interviews are further marred by bizarre editing, dopey graphics, wretched sound mixing, and crass but halfhearted attempts at titillation. Still, Gilbert (who appears on camera in Dylan-esque curls and Western shirt) comes off not as a huckster but as an obsessive fan who, lacking either filmmaking skill or access to his subject, deluded himself (and his pitiable interviewees) into believing he was making a legitimate documentary. Then again, maybe he is a huckster: this is his fourth alleged Dylan film, and it apparently recycles footage from the previous three. Also, he's responsible for something called *Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison*, which doesn't even seem to be a joke.

I never would have thought the world needed another documentary about Bob Dylan, but Gilbert's fumbling of some interesting material about Dylan's gargantuan Rolling Thunder Rewe and temporary conversion to Christianity indicates that his strange late-70s period is worthy of exploration by a competent filmmaker. As for existing docs, I'd recommend D.A. Pennebaker's *Dont Look Back*, a record of Dylan's 1965 British tour; Martin Scorsese's expansive *No Direction Home*, which covers his roots and early career; or even *Eat the Document*, an obfuscatory mess that Dylan himself prepared from footage shot by Pennebaker in 1966. I didn't list these films above in the "Others" section for similar titles, because putting them in the company of Gilbert's ripoff would have been an insult to their creators.

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crossed for more meat-punching

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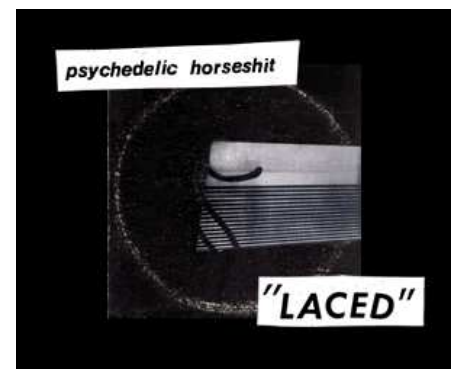
Blitzen Trapper, having failed to destroy the void, settle for a US tour

Magnetic Fields documentary coming to Netflix... I mean, DVD?

Van Dyke Parks (yes, the one who hasn't released any new music in over 15 years) launches 7-inch series

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