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## Music DVD Review: Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years: Busy Being Born...Again!

By **Glen Boyd**: 2008-09-28 07:43:50

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This film has actually been floating around for a few years now in various forms – usually as part of those sort of unauthorized DVD boxed sets you see in the music section of your local megamart's DVD selection covering the histories of classic rock acts.



If you've seen DVDs titled "Inside the music" or "critical review" of ... (inject your favorite classic rock act here), then you more or less get the picture.

What makes *Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years*, just a bit different however, and what sets it apart from those other cheap knock-offs, is that it actually does shed some light on what is probably the least understood, and in many ways the most shrouded in mystery period of Bob Dylan's career.

As the seventies drew to a close, Bob Dylan blew many of his most devoted fans minds by following up both the Rolling Thunder tour, and the album *Street Legal*, with the album *Slow Train Coming*. Produced by the late, legendary producer Jerry Wexler (who is interviewed on this DVD), *Slow Train* is an album which heralded the arrival of yet another new side of Bob Dylan. One, which in this case was characterized by the fire and brimstone of his newfound conversion to the evangelical brand of apocalyptic end-times Christianity, expoused at the time by people like Hal Lindsey in the book *The Late Great Planet Earth*.

Never mind the fact that the album featured the same sort of righteously inspired, yet venomous lyricism that had been already been a hallmark of his career in songs like "Ballad Of A Thin Man." The fact that in this particular case, his newfound point of view didn't exactly line up with his former leftist politics – well, it wasn't received well by some of his former fans. That is actually an understatement.

Although the three albums which constituted Dylan's so-called "born again" period -- *Slow Train Coming*, *Saved*, and *Shot Of Love* -- represented his most abrupt stylistic turn since he shocked the folkie purists by going electric at Newport, when taken in retrospect they also yielded some of the most memorable songs of an otherwise low point in his career. These included the Grammy winning "Gotta Serve Somebody," and "Every Grain Of Sand," one of Dylan's best love songs.

*Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years* isn't perfect by any means.

The film's most obvious flaw lies in the way filmmaker Joel Gilbert -- an obvious Dylan nut who journeys coast to coast dressed as his idol did in his "Jesus period" seeking answers – is so, well you know, "obvious" in a non-objective way.

That said, Gilbert does come a long way towards finding those answers, and he uncovers previously unknown information that the most enquiring sort of Dylanologist would want to know - as it relates to one of the most mysterious periods of a career that has often been nothing but.

If you are looking for live shots of those Dylan "Born Again" tours, you won't find any here (well at least any that feature the actual music). But what you will find is some very eye-opening interview footage with the people who were there when Dylan got Jesus –including his former pastor and *Slow Train* producer, the late, great Jerry Wexler.

For those fans seeking answers to the mysteries of Dylan's shocking conversion way back then, this film comes as close to providing them as any I've ever seen. For the less hardcore, and especially those seeking vintage live Dylan, your search begins with *Don't Look Back* and Scorsese's brilliant *No Direction Home*.

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September 29th, 2008 at 22:57

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October 5th, 2008 at 03:08

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same thing with his film about Dylan and Barry Feinstein.

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