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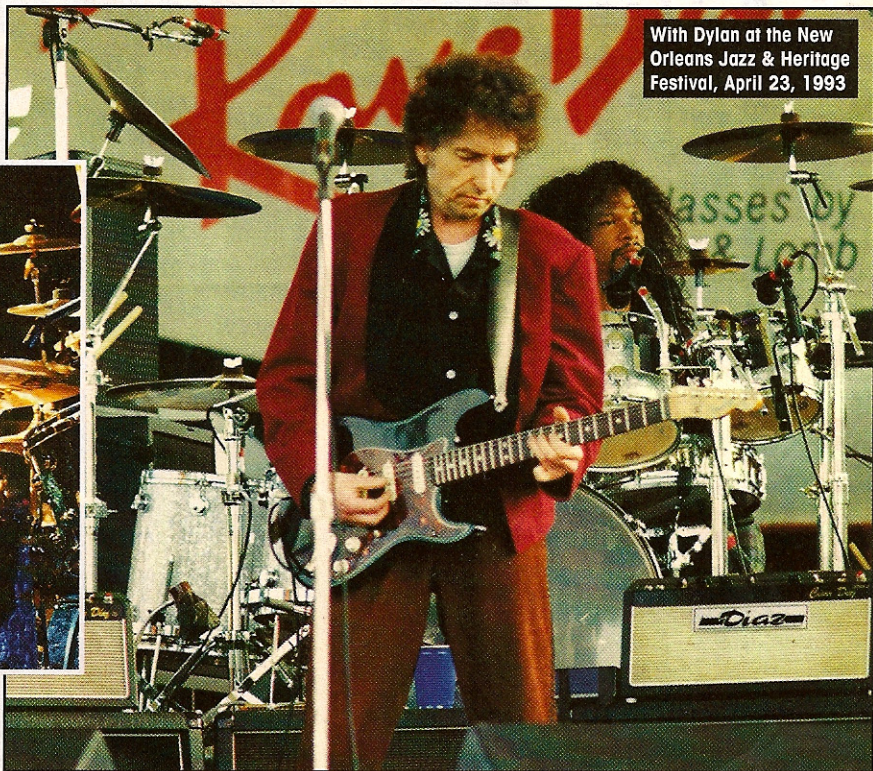
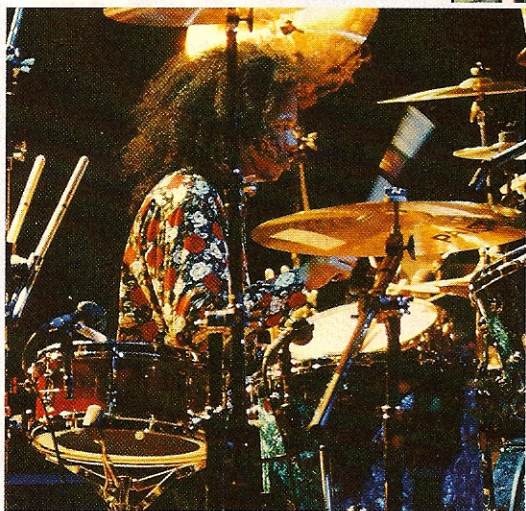
# WINSTON WATSON

**BOB DYLAN'S MID-'90S DRUMMER SHARES HIS TOUR DIARIES ON A BRAND-NEW DVD. SO WHAT WAS IT LIKE PLAYING WITH THE MAN?**

**B**ob Dylan never told me what to play, so "preparation" with him is not what you might think. Dylan doesn't exactly leave the "bread crumbs" you need as a musician—he just wants you to come along. It was like this from the very beginning.

I had no preparation for my first gig with Dylan. My friend Charlie Quintana was Dylan's second drummer in late

would go over material at soundcheck, and I learned a lot more songs. Within three months, Ian Wallace (my training wheels) was gone, and I was Dylan's only drummer for the next five years.



1992, playing side by side with Ian Wallace. Charlie had to leave the tour to do a project with Guns N' Roses, so he convinced Dylan to give me a chance to play alongside Ian. I showed up for the gig in Kansas City on September 9, 1992, and didn't even get a set list until twenty minutes before the first down-beat! I said to myself, *I sort of know these songs from the records.* But...big difference! So I just winged it the best I could. Tony Garnier, the MD and bass player, would shout out "Shuffle!" or "Four on the floor!" or whatever, and I made it through somehow. Later we

Of course, we had many rehearsals, typically before each leg of a tour. But Bob Dylan wants to play a song like Bob Dylan wants to play a song *today*. That is to say that whatever fancies him he does on that night, and it could be different almost every night. Dylan doesn't arrange music to please "the memory embalmers," as he says, but instead likes to mix it up. I've even seen the in-song key change! Sometimes Dylan would shout out what I call "an audible," where

he would just scream the name of a song we had never rehearsed, like "Joey!" That's when you had to hold on to your hat, because it could be rocky. The more I played with Dylan, the more I realized I had to rely on my instincts, and that's the way he wanted it.

In terms of grooves to prepare, again, there was no set formula. Even if you had something down cold, you might never get to play it because Dylan does what he feels like every night. We did do a lot of shuffles—sometimes I would shuffle all night, a little behind the beat, a little ahead of the beat.... There are a lot of variations on the shuffle, and I probably played most of them with Dylan.

Winston Watson gets into all the details of his five years with Bob Dylan in his new DVD, *Bob Dylan Never Ending Tour Diaries: Drummer Winston Watson's Incredible Journey*. For more, go to [bobbylandiaries.com](http://bobbylandiaries.com).

