

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2009

Drummer Winston Watson reflects on the Never-Ending Tour in the 1990s

Such is the hunger for Dylan-related product, a whole new genre of unofficial DVDs has recently found a ready audience. Lacking official Dylan performances and appearances, they either focus on the testimony of former sidemen and associates or gather the opinions of critics and writers.

They're aimed at the hardcore fan who's exhausted all the official releases (and the best of the bootleg performance footage).

So the new DVD from Wienerworld, Bob Dylan: Never Ending Tour Diaries: Drummer Winston Watson's Incredible Journey, was approached with a degree of scepticism.

Watson, Dylan's flamboyant drummer in the mid-1990s, performed over 400 shows in five years. He saw enough to be able to tell an interesting tale, though he remains respectful and discreet.

This charming 100-minute film quickly won me over. Given the limited resources at his disposal – interview with Watson, the drummer's rough video footage, fan bootleg videos, graphics and footage of their Dylan tribute band – director Joel Gilbert has worked wonders in creating a very watchable, occasionally revealing, documentary.

Gilbert was lucky in his subject – Watson's an engaging, disarming, likeable character who's walked the walk but is still modest enough to be thrilled by the memories. He was, and is, a big Dylan fan.

You share his triumphs, then sympathise that he lost the gig (and his wife), and that he's now earning his living working as an electrician back in Tucson, Arizona. When a film draws you in like this, you know it works.

Bob Dylan: Never-Ending Tour Diaries is enjoyable and informative. Watson's anecdotes and reflections help to flesh out what we know about Dylan the working, touring musician.

Recommended.

I'll be exploring the rest of the Wienerworld Dylan DVDs.

Info: www.highway61ent.com

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POSTED BY GERRY SMITH AT **12:03 AM** 

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