

DVD Review: *Bob Dylan and The Band: Down in the Flood*

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Author: [Rhetta Akamatsu](#) — Published: Sep 19, 2012 at 3:34 pm

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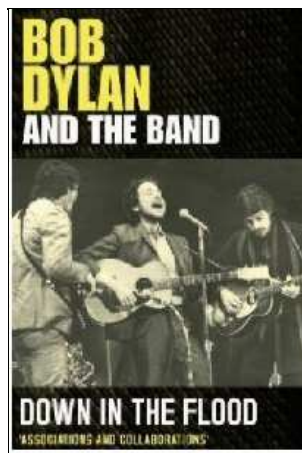
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As a nearly life-long Dylan fan who discovered him with *Bringing It All Back Home* in 1965 as a pre-teen, I believe *Bob Dylan and The Band: Down in the Flood* is the finest documentary about Dylan as well as about The Band that there has been so far. The film covers the collaboration of Dylan with The Band from the first rehearsals in 1965 until *The Last Waltz* in 1976.

Dylan had already made his name as a folk singer and was practically worshiped by the folk-music community. Today, it is hard to remember what a divide there was between folk, country, and pop music in the early '60s. Many fans felt betrayed when Dylan went electric. They thought he had sold out.

Luckily, The Band were not intimidated by the boos and insults thrown at Dylan in the early electric concerts, because they had got their start backing up Ronnie Hawkins, a rock and roll singer in the classic style who played clubs throughout Canada.

In those days, The Band were The Hawks and they played some rough places where things sometimes got physical. Because of this, they were able to ignore everything and just play on beyond Dylan when the crowd got loud and abusive.



Thanks to this, the four Canadians, the good old boy from Arkansas, and the Jewish kid from Minnesota were able to maintain one of the most influential partnerships in the history of rock music, changing the face of the music world both together and separately forever. They brought Americana into popular music, blending blues, rock, and country on Dylan's albums and tours and on the legendary recordings they made in Woodstock during the '60s that led to rock's first bootleg recording, *Great White Wonder*.

Of course, The Band themselves created musical history with their *Music From Big Pink* and even more so with *The Band*, which contained genre-blending songs like "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" and "Up on Cripple Creek."

This documentary includes new footage and rare recordings of songs, as well as expert commentary from John Simon, who produced the first two Band albums, rock journalist Robert Christgau, and other experts. There are also memorable anecdotes from Mickey Jones, who played drums with The Band during Levon Helm's absence in 1966; Charlie McCoy, who played on Dylan's Nashville recordings; and Garth Hudson, the talented organist for The Band.

Over all, this documentary provides fabulous insight into Dylan, The Band, and their impact on music then and now. It is a must for any fan of Dylan, The Band, or the history of popular music.

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Rhetta Akamatsu is an author and online journalist who writes about music, books, movies, and more. She is the author of *The Irish Slaves: Slavery, Indentured Servitude and Contract Labor Among Irish Immigrants*, *Haunted Marietta*, *Tain't Nobody's ...*

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1 - Christina Karen

Sep 19, 2012 at 9:51 pm

Bob Dylan's Stealing of James Damiano's Songs

No artist can lay claim to the controversy that has surrounded the career of songwriter James Damiano. Thirty two years ago James Damiano began an odyssey that led him into a legal maelstrom with Bob Dylan that, to this day, fascinates the greatest of intellectual minds.

Since auditioning for the legendary CBS Record producer John Hammond, Sr., who influenced the careers of music industry icons Charlie Christian, Billy Holiday, Bob Dylan, Pete Seger, Bruce Springsteen and Stevie Ray Vaughan, James has engaged in a half a billion dollar copyright infringement law suit with Bob Dylan.

As the curtain rises on the stage of deceit we learn that CBS / Sony international recording artist, Bob Dylan not only used songs and lyrics written by James Damiano but also solicited Mr. Damiano's materials for a period of over ten years and eleven months.

As per Judicial filings Bob Dylan's name is credited to the songs. One of those songs is nominated for a Grammy as the best rock song of the year. Ironically the title of that song is Dignity.

2 - Mark

Sep 20, 2012 at 2:51 am

The kook above has been hounding Bob for years. Get a life.

3 - Adrian Everitt

Sep 20, 2012 at 3:17 am

Just listened to this guy's 'Steel Guitars' - supposedly the basis of 'Dignity', but not even remotely similar!

4 - Mike L

Sep 20, 2012 at 6:35 am

Gotta agree with Adrian re Steel Guitars - nice enough tune but not at all like Dignity. There's just nothing there.

5 - Mike L

Sep 20, 2012 at 6:36 am

What kind of rare footage is there of Dylan and the Band together. I'd assume nothing from 1974 ... and are they even allowed to use Last Waltz footage?

6 - Rhetta

Sep 20, 2012 at 6:47 am

Hi, Mike, there is rehearsal footage for one thing. And there is not footage from the 1974 tour but there is footage from Last Waltz.

7 - jct

Sep 20, 2012 at 7:22 am

It just so happens James Damiano, for over sixteen years has been fighting in federal court to retain the rights to his Intellectual Property from Bob Dylan, for the theft of his entire song catalog, which took thirty-seven years of his life to write.

8 - DRH

Sep 20, 2012 at 11:49 am

I've tried to find one shread of evidence that anything this James Damiano has written is even remotely similar to any of bob's Music and there is just nothing there.

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