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Bob Dylan and The Band: Down In The Flood

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By [George W. Harris](#)



This 114 minute dvd is a fascinating (unauthorized) documentary chronicling Bob Dylan's break from the acoustic folk scene, plugging in his guitar and therefore plunging in the nascent rock scene, and then returning to his folk roots and continued career following the stress and expectations of stardom, coupled with his motorcycle accident. What sets this whole documentary apart is that it also brings forth the background of the formation of The Band, which started as a lounge band-backup band for Ronnie Hawkins, became the band that Dylan plugged in with during his controversial '66 tour when he was booed throughout the tour, and then became their own iconic entity.

There is also enough space to show the formation of The Band, and the creation of its debut recording Music From Big Pink, that, like Dylan's music, surprised everyone that first heard it because it sounded unlike everything else being recorded back then.

Interspersed with interviews ranging from Ronnie Hawkins, guitarist Charlie McCoy (a Nashville session cat who played on Blonde on Blonde , Nashville Skyline and John Wesley Harding), Garth Hudson, John Simon, Mickey Jones and various biographers, writers and historians, you get some fascinating vintage film of Dylan performing with The Band, reacting to his undesired fame, relaxing in upstate New York, and opening up like any other vulnerable 20-30 something caught in life he really didn't desire. What one comes away with after viewing is that every artist must stay true to his own vision, and not what others expect of him. Dylan, always following his own path, did that to the frustration of others who expected some leftist Messiah. Instead, Dylan started his own spiritual search, beginning with his biblical themed Harding album, as well as his now famous Basement Tapes, and carried it through his famed conversion to Christianity, further confounding both the secular and religious. On the secular side, The Band's professionalism, shaped by marathon rehearsals with Hawkins, shows that nothing replaces hard work. Excellent lessons in a musical format.

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