

# BLUE SUEDE NEWS

THE HOUSE ORGAN OF THE CHURCH OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

## **Bob Dylan 1966 – 1978: After The Crash** / Chrome Dreams DVD CV1s390

In a nutshell: talking heads with British accents (for the most part) analyze Dylan's career and music from the period listed in the title. While I feel safe in saying that this type of analytical activity is thoroughly antithetical to the art that Bob Dylan has created, it is such a popular hobby that there is a 25 year old magazine devoted to the 'craft' of obsessing over Dylan and his music (Isis). While I would suggest that close listenings to John Wesley Harding, Blood On The Tracks and even Self Portrait would be a great deal more revealing, that doesn't mean this is a worthless effort or that nothing can be gained from watching this 2 hour documentary. I have after all watched the 4 hour one from PBS, and this one mostly covers ground not covered in that one. Of course the music you'll hear is actually recorded by a Dylan tribute act called Dylanesque, apart from a couple of clips from live TV broadcasts and the Isle of Wight Festival, things like that. And the 'bonus' bits are really mostly advertisements, although I was reminded that infamous "garbologist" A.J. Weberman attended my alma mater Michigan State before I got there. Personally, I mostly regret the influences Dylan has had on my own songwriting (and on some others' too), and have tried to move away from that. But that doesn't mean I regard (much of) his art as anything less than genius. There are some people who have successfully carried off the "next Dylan" thing, and a great deal more who should not have tried it. The producers of this wisely quit just at the point where Dylan was "born again", though I suspect it is only so that there can be a third 2 hour documentary. You're right, I just hinted that there was a first part and that this is the second. If obsessing about Bob Dylan is one of your hobbies, you'll probably enjoy this a lot. Me, I think I'll go back upstairs and listen to the most recent Dylan CD, and thanks to fellow MSU escapee Tom Thomas for sending it! Chromedreams.co.uk –MB

## **Ronnie Hawkins – Still Alive and Kickin'** / MVD Visual / \$19.95

Originally released on VHS in 2004 (and aired on Canadian television), Still Alive and Kickin' allows us to spend a tumultuous year and a half with Rockabilly legend Ronnie Hawkins. Even if you don't know who Hawkins is (and if you don't this DVD does a great job of introducing him and his history), you will be drawn in by the story of how in 2002 Hawkins was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and eventually beats the disease. From the diagnosis we are lead through the proceeding year, complete with conversations and celebrations with friends including Kris Kristofferson, Robbie Robertson, Bill Clinton and David Foster. What we are seeing in those times are friends saying goodbye. Although Hawkins is visibly touched by the outpourings of love and support, he isn't ready to give up. The story and history make for compelling viewing. As a special feature of the DVD release we are given expanded interviews several of the artists featured inside which offer a few great stories that didn't fit in the original cut of the film. [www.r2r.ca](http://www.r2r.ca) -Eric Banister