

The Electric Review

BOB DYLAN: After The Crash – 1966-1978. In Association with ISIS Magazine and Chrome Dreams. MVD Distribution.

By John Aiello

The recent release of Dylan's "Modern Times" has seen a deluge of critical analysis re-proclaiming the reclusive poet as *genius*, unparalleled in his ability to synthesize the history of American popular song and then personalize it with his unique interpretation and biting lines.

Yet, no musician reaches the peaks of a "Modern Times" without hard traveling down countless roads (stops along the moonlit seaboard, tours through the outer edges of storm-black skies, stops along the muddy shoulder, eyes catching tale of the moon in these tear-sick stains of smoke and rain).

In essence, "Modern Times" is a record about where Dylan's journey has led him, while the wonderful new DVD, **After The Crash**, is about the middle years of that journey and all that he encountered. After Dylan's motorcycle crash in 1966, time seemingly stood still for his fans as they waited for him to come back to a "Blonde on Blonde" sound that would be no more.

Even though Dylan's aura was not as kinetic in the 70s, his music was still as meaningful – maybe even more meaningful. Accordingly, **After The Crash** covers the years 1966-1978 and ushers us into the kingdom of one of Bob Dylan's most introspective, spiritual and creative periods, bringing us face-to-face with the many writers and players who crossed Dylan's path during this decade.

Crash recounts the story of the period by interspersing footage with interviews to create a film-document of this sometimes forgotten period in the context of Dylan lore. Writers Clinton Heylin and Nigel Williamson provide insightful segments, analyzing the bigger picture of the Dylan myth in relation to the direction that his work went subsequent to the crash.

In addition, some of the many players who supported Dylan (Rob Stoner, Bruce Langhorne, Scarlet Rivera) speak to what it was like working with a guy whose typical *method-of-operation* was to blow into the studio, lay down the tracks and then blow out again - no spare time for rehearsal or polish. Further, Rob Stoner's remarks about Phil Ochs bring forth a new perspective on the circumstances surrounding Ochs' tragic suicide.

However, the centerpiece of the production comes in the segment that features playwright Jacques Levy in his last-ever interview. Levy, who co-wrote much of the "Desire" record

with Dylan, is sharp and searching in his comments; in retrospect, Levy is probably the one who helped reconnect Dylan with the depth of imagination that led him to the door of the “Rolling Thunder Revue.”

Also noted for concert footage that includes a legendary performance of Dylan and Johnny Cash doing “Girl From The North Country.” Running time: 2 hours.