

DVD Reviews



By Samir Shukla

Bob Dylan Inside Dylan's Jesus Years (Highway 61)



One of American music icon Bob Dylan's most talked about periods in his career, even more than when he went electric, is his "Jesus" years. It was at the Vineyard Church in Los Angeles circa 1978 that Dylan converted to Christianity. The Jewish Dylan not only adopted Christianity but also recorded three gospel albums during 1978-1981. The records, initially disdained by critics and many of his fans, have become a part of Dylan's chameleonic archives. Of the three albums released during this time, including *Saved* and *Shot of Love*, *Slow Train Coming* is arguably one of his best works. The documentary *Inside Dylan's Jesus Years* attempts to unravel Dylan's brief Christ experimentation where producer/director Joel Gilbert interviews key figures from that era. There are no direct interviews with Dylan, this documentary's focus is on the folks that were familiar with and worked with Dylan during his "gospel" years. The Dylan inner circle gives insights into his thinking during that time. They include producer Jerry Wexler, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, background singer Regina McCrary, keyboardist Spooner Oldham, writer Joel Selvin, songwriter Al Kasha, and Dylan historian AJ Weberman. The DVD also features rare photos, recently found interviews, and grainy live concert footage from the era. In his first-ever interview, Dylan's Bible class teacher, Pastor Bill Dwyer, talks about Dylan's embrace of Christianity. Documentary maker Gilbert is quite adept at coaxing a story out of those interviewed, revealing a side of Dylan that sheds light on the legendary spiritual and musical nomad. Dylan himself explains the impact of Jesus on his life and music in a recently found interview from 1981. This is a worthy DVD for Dylan fans seeking to peek further into the psyche of their beloved songsmith.

Rush Snakes & Arrows Live (Rounder)



Yes. The Canadian rockers are still in fine form after more than three decades of rocking and touring. Rush toured the world during 2007, and this film captures two shows in Netherlands in their entirety, showcasing the trio's musical camaraderie and showmanship. The three DVD collection *Snakes & Arrows* documents Rush's concerts filmed with over 20 high definition cameras in numerous angles over two nights in October 2007 at the Netherlands' Ahoy Rotterdam arena. The third disc features additional footage filmed during a concert in Atlanta in July 2008. All the classics are here, along with material from their long-awaited *Snakes & Arrows* recording. Rush released their self-titled debut in 1974 and the band has since expanded rock's musical borders and influenced countless musicians. Guitarist Alex Lifeson, bassist/keyboardist/vocalist Geddy Lee and drummer/lyricist Neil Peart showcase virtuosity that's gelled from playing together for some 35 years and unleash precise bombast to make the listener glide on air. The shows filmed here feature brilliant cinematography, lighting and multi-media effects stitched with surround sound that gives the viewer front row seats to one of the best live bands around. The band's chops and vocals are in top form where the guitar fills the air, the bass builds a deep foundation and the drums blanket the whole sound. There are many tour moments and outtakes featured including the comedic talents of both Lifeson and Lee.

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