

A Nod to Bob, December 4, 2001 amazon.com

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Reviewer: **Thomas G. Palaima** (Austin, TX United States) - Superb interpretations of America's supreme musical genius. Each version here is 'real', the shining quality of even Dylan's flawed or tossed-off compositions. Standouts are Guy Davis' "Sweetheart Like You", Spider John Koerner and Dave Ray's "Delia", and John Gorka's "Girl from the North Country." If you can listen to Martin Simpson's "Boots of Spanish leather" without weeping for the beauty of it, you haven't got tears. The range of styles (cf. Tom Landa and the Paperboys doing "All Along the Watchtower" and Hart-Rouge doing "Dieu a Nos Cotes") reflects how Dylan has absorbed and transformed all genres of American music.

Dylan still appreciates the real and he certainly recognized that this 'birthday gift' was the real deal. Read, by contrast, Mikal Gilmore's interview with Bob Dylan in the November 22 Rolling Stone for Dylan's keen nose for phoniness.

Mikal knows what's what. His brother is Gary Gilmore, of Mailer's \*Executioner's Song\* fame and Mikal's own superb \*Shot in the Heart,\* which I have used in my war and violence courses. His attachment to the 'real' in life seems to have gotten Bob Dylan to speak in non-oblique ways about what he is about.

Well, there was the 1991 Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammy's where Dylan was presented with a ridiculous proposal to have others (mainly pop phonies) sing a medley of his songs, and all he had to do was "show up." So he said okay.

BEGIN QUOTE

DYLAN: Then the Gulf War broke out. The Grammy people called and said, "Listen, we're in a tight fix. So-and-so, who was going to sing 'Times Are A-Changin',' is afraid to get on an airplane. So-and-so, who was going to do 'Like a Rolling Stone,' doesn't want to travel because he just had another baby and doesn't want to leave his family." That's understandable. But then so-and-so, who was going to sing, "It's All Over, Baby Blue," was in Africa and didn't want to take a chance flying to New York, and so-and-so, who was going to sing "All Along the Watchtower," wasn't sure he wanted to be at any high-visibility place right then, because it might be a little dangerous. So they said, "Could you come and sing? Could \*you\* fill the time?" And I said, "What about the guy who's introducing me [Jack Nicholson]?" They said, "He's OK. He's coming."

Anyway I got disillusioned with all the characters at that time-with their inner character and their ability to be able to keep their word and their idealism and their insecurity. All the ones that have the gall to thrust their tortured inner psyches on an outer world but can't at least be true to their word....I just lost respect for them. There's a few that are decent and God-fearing and will stand up in a righteous way. But I wouldn't want to count on most of them.

END QUOTE

Count on "A Nod to Bob" instead.