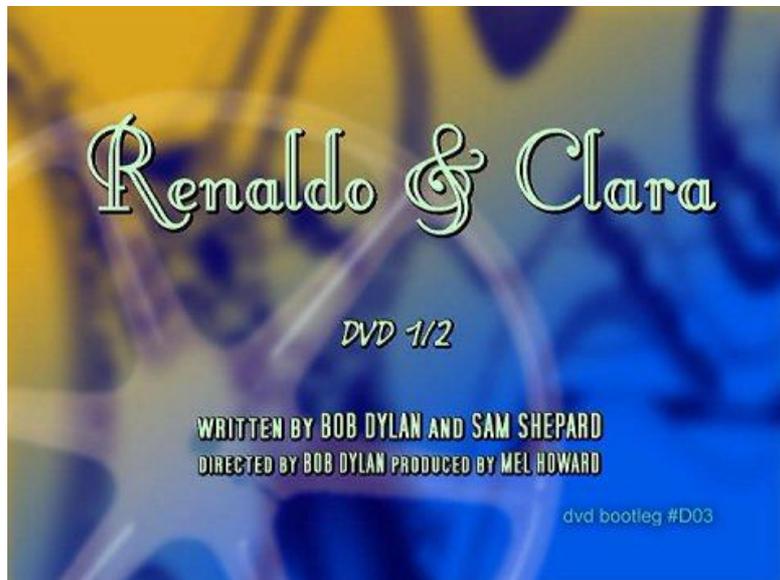


D003 RENALDO & CLARA

(This review was written by Ted Goranson (www.filmfolded.com) and posted here with his permission.)



These days most everything is inherently cinematic: poetry, music, literature.

That's a good thing if you understand how cinema works and can escape its control when needed. One technique is to retreat to non-cinematic art, to surf the various pathways therein and then come back to the moving image from the outside.

This film, if you can find the four hour version, can provide one such exercise. Dylan builds his songs around images, but they are not images from film or film-influenced phrases. His images are what appears in dreams, originating in real life and sliced and diced by drugs. (Incidentally, the period of this film marks the transition from active tripping of various kinds to passive by his "acceptance" of fundamentalism - another drug.)

His method has always been to eschew a plan, to avoid premeditated structure, to abandon great themes. Instead, he just starts, waits for images and ideas to appear and then arranges them on the table. His art is a combination of selection and composition. The selection is a matter of discarding everything that seems to be simple. That automatically puts him in the world of the Tambourine Man, where he has been in various guises for decades.

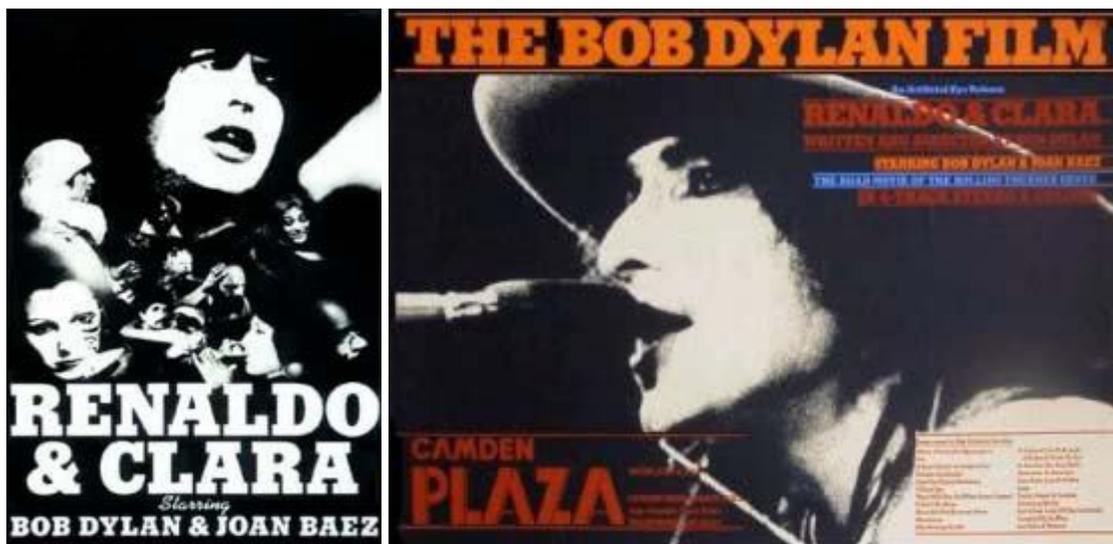
The matter of composition is something else. He just trusts how they appear. Since they all come from one mind, and that mind is coherent and somewhat interesting, they hang together. He doesn't know how they do and has given up questioning, except for a brief period of examining Kabbalah.

That's how he does it with his music and, to judge from his audience, it works. He also does it with his prose rambles. This works less well; the act of juxtaposing elements in

his songs leverages the vocabulary of rhythmic associations he pretty much invented. But he has no equivalent to serve his writing projects, so most of them come across as sophomoric. Same with this film.

He just started. But images in film (at least films like this) have to come from things that are presented in the real world. He relies on some friends to help create and select the images / scenes / sequences. Ginsberg is an anchor who does understand the rhythms of poetry where Bob does not, but he is as ignorant as Bob concerning film.

Another friend is Sam Shepard who is credited as co-writer. During this time, he was working with Terence Malick on another project which is about the same problem of selection. Shepard and Malick for that matter have a coherent theory of "selection" that they can use in conceiving their projects and setting the basic tone. We can see much of that here; it all relates to folding of persons into characters that are assignable to other bodies. Thus we have many "actors" playing more than one role; roles that are assigned to more than one actor; scenes that are copied from real life; lives that are generated from scenes (bordello vignettes, Indian cosmologies, Black injustices, beat poems ...)



That's the selection half and it is interesting as all get out. The composition half is pure dreck. Dylan trusts his intuitions as he always does. But these pieces don't all come from the inner spinning of a whole mind like Kieslowski's or Tarkovsky's. They come from all over and he stitches them together as if they did actually come from his visions. But they didn't so it has no coherent being.

He tries to use songs, his and others, as glue. Some of these are enjoyable by themselves but they sure don't help assemble a cinematic being.

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