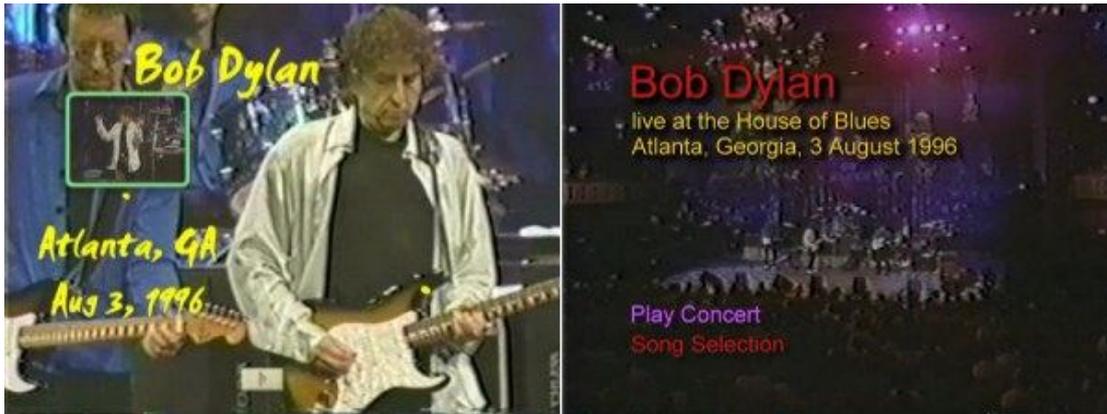


D006 NO REASON TO GET EXCITED?

Welcome to the enigma that is Bob Dylan. I can understand why people would want to give this show five stars. If all you look for is clean pro-shot footage over top sound, then this release is indeed right up there with the best of them. But a truer test of merit comes with the answer to this simple question: once it's done, how soon or how often are you likely to be drawn back by the charm or allure of what you've just seen for another go round? On that basis, this dull DVD falls down badly and, if three stars here equates to average or just above, then three it all it deserves.

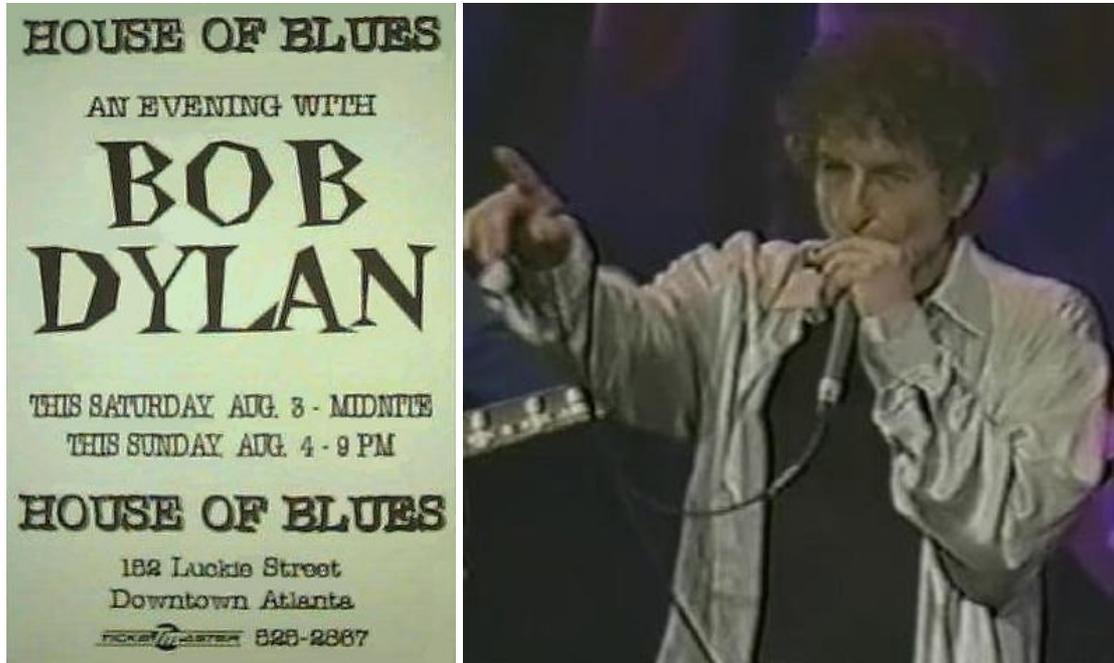


There are two problems - first is that, throughout, Bob is animated as a dead halibut. He delivers everything with a deadpan detachment that lacks passion or conviction and at times borders on the comatose. This serves well enough for the slower, more reflective numbers such as Shake Sugaree, Boots, or My Back Pages (although he trashes the tune of that for no good reason I can see), but in the majority of cases is at glaring odds with the spirit of the moment. Imagine Jerry Lee Lewis strolling up to the mike and declaring in his normal, everyday voice "goodness gracious, great balls of fire." That's how Bob twice delivers the line "everybody must get stoned." Okay, so on one level singing might, as Bob once said, be an exercise in tonal breath control, but if it isn't also about something a bit more visceral, then what's the point?



The other downer is that, in song after song, Bob takes on lead guitar duties and, though competent he may be, he's neither very inspired nor is he Eric Clapton. We're treated to interminable repetitions, whether on electric or acoustic, of the same leaden little three-note riff that very quickly jars. Can you bring to mind the live take of Born

In Time that was included on *Live 1961-2000* (also on various EPs)? That otherwise lovely track was seriously marred by a long, crass and very tedious one-note play-out. Though I often wondered, without really caring, who was responsible for that, it's only after seeing this DVD that I come to realise that the culprit there, as here, is none other than D himself.



There are plusses too. Sugaree is seductively sweet. Train To Cry is done slow (a Georgia crawl, maybe?) and would have been fine had Bob risen even halfway to meet its promise. That lilting nineties arrangement of She Belongs To Me was always gorgeous - here, though, sadly, yet more of Bob's grungy lead scars its beauty. If you'd paid \$85 for your ticket to see this fifteen-song show (and that was indeed the price), I wonder what you'd have thought of it? Probably how good it was, for that's the effect his presence can have. From the perspective of nine years, however, and in the face of a huge and star-studded back-catalogue, this show fails to shine.

This was the first gig of a pair on the same day (4 August 1996 - see poster above). For the other, see [D342](#).

THANKS Piquet

STARS Three