

D018 SHALOM ALEICHEM!

The eight chapters and near 64 minutes of [D018](#) reveal to us two contrasting sides of Bob Dylan - the patient, benevolent, introverted and very guarded man and the confident, out-going performer.



We start with an excerpt, running 9:20, from his LA press conference of 16 December 1965. The rather better known San Francisco Q&A (see [D011](#)) had taken place thirteen days earlier, on the 3rd, and this next one plays like the follow-on part two it actually is. D starts out looking glum and wasted, but, needed by the usual raft of inane questions (*How many protest singers are there?*) comes gradually to life. He categorises Barry McGuire as "a mixture of country and western and 17th century minstrel music" and, in response to being asked "Are you ill?" snaps back "No, I'm from New York City!"

Next comes a 3:30 snippet from Canadian TV showing his brief 1986 appearance at the Junos to present a Lifetime Achievement Award to Toronto folkie Gordon Lightfoot. After a fulsome introduction from the show's blonde presenter come thirty seconds of empty stage. Finally Bob appears, possibly through the wrong door and certainly *very* bemused. He looks fit and dapper, except for an upturned jacket collar (which may or may not be accidental) and incongruous black leather gloves. As soon as Lightfoot shows, Bob hands over the award and is gone.

Gone maybe to Chabad. Chabad Lubavitch is a Brooklyn-based Jewish outreach organisation, sprung, like Dylan himself, from roots in Eastern Europe that seeks to promote Judaism throughout the world. *Lubavitch* (literally "city of brotherly love") is the name of the town in White Russia where the movement was based for more than a century, whilst *Chabad* is an acronym from three Hebrew words meaning *wisdom*, *comprehension* and *knowledge*. Chabad avidly courts the support of the rich, famous

and powerful, and has been very successful at attracting celebrities, business tycoons and world leaders (Jimmy Carter, Al Gore, Vladimir Putin) to its cause. The first Chabad telethon was broadcast in 1980 and has since become a more or less star-studded annual fundraising event, hosted latterly by non-Jewish actor and long-time supporter Jon Voight. [D018](#) recalls for us Bob's appearances at three of these events, in 1986, 1989 and 1992.

The '86 clip ([D018](#) menu states August, though the show actually aired on 14 September) runs 5:45 and, to give you a flavour of the kind of thing you're in for, starts with a man balancing a step-ladder on his teeth. Bob, in England at the time of the broadcast working on *Hearts Of Fire*, nonetheless offers two taped contributions - first himself (enthused) backed by TP&H (not) covering an abridged country version of the Fred Rose song Thank God. This film was supposedly shot at Mountain View, CA on 5 August during rehearsal / sound-check before the night's show. We then see a short but sincere appeal, spoken direct to camera, for viewers to do what they can to support the cause.



[Chopped Liver, 1989](#)

On to '89 for a 9:45 segment featuring "Chopped Liver", a scratch band comprising Bob, his son-in-law Peter Himmelman and actor Harry Dean Stanton (who in *Renaldo & Clara* played Lafkezio, the shady sort who traded his horse to Renaldo / Bob for Joan Baez). Himmelman (guitar) sings two songs - a traditional Yiddish lullaby called *Einsleipt Mein Kind Dein Eigelach* then old standard Hava Nagilah with, sandwiched in between, a Mexican ballad from Harry Dean (guitar + harp) called Adelita. During the first, Bob briefly holds to his lips but does not play a flute, then switches to a recorder which he tentatively toots like a shy third grader. Accompanying Stanton, his playing is more spirited but still rudimentary. He also adds (in Spanish, mind) less than word-perfect backing vocals. Before Hava Negilah he wanders away and returns with a harmonica which he proceeds to play with just a bit less style and panache than Harry Dean. No word is spoken. Though it's praiseworthy of Bob to be doing this at all, no-one who didn't already know would believe, seeing this, that a celebrated musician, a

musician of worldwide renown, was here before them. He comes on, rather, like a dim-witted janitor standing in for the celebrated musician who's failed to show. The worst of it is that Bob can probably play both flute and recorder reasonably well. This is the man, remember, who, when mandolin player Peter Ostroushko couldn't give him the part he wanted on *If You See Her* at the second (Minneapolis) *BOTT* sessions, took the instrument and laid it down himself. It's the man who, at the Red Sky mixing sessions, decided the album's title track needed something extra, so, removing a brand new accordion from its bubble wrap, laid down that part too. He's played saxophone on stage (19.10.81) and can be seen in *Rolling Thunder Logbook* blowing trumpet. Music courses through every fibre of his being. But, though both in his song-writing and on the concert stage he, the artist, willingly exposes all he has and is, elsewhere, as here, or when interviewed or paraded at award ceremonies, he, the man, holds back, so keeping just a small something - a *precious* something - of and for himself.



Sundown, yella moon ...

The Chabad '91 chapter (6:50) shows Bob noodling pleasantly away on electric guitar alongside Kinky Friedman as the latter sings *Sold American* to his own acoustic accompaniment. Bob talks, too, first appealing for the return of books from the Lenin Library then remarking significantly

Chabad is my favourite organization in the whole world, really

and, for all that events such as this elicit BS and hyperbole by the bucket-load, you sense that he means it.

Next from September 1993 comes eleven and a half minutes of Bob and Carlos Santana being interviewed behind some stadium for MTV (pic above). While Carlos gives earnest and eloquent replies to the reporter's questions, Bob plays his usual

cards-close-to-chest, give-nothing-away dead bat, revealing only that, to him, a lot of current music "sounds defective". But you can see his patience gradually wearing thinner until finally impishness gets the better of prudence and things suddenly get more interesting. On teen violence: *Television causes a lot of that violence*. On guns: *I don't think there's **enough** guns*. Where do kids get (toy) guns? *They get them in a toy store!* But the last word goes to Carlos. "Have as many guns as you want," he says. "Just don't make any bullets."

The *Dharma and Greg* snippets - a few words, a few smiles, a little jamming - run 3:30. See the whole episode, if you wish, on [D181](#) or [D301](#).

Finally, an odd and ultimately dissatisfying twelve minutes of segued clips from East Rutherford, NJ, bringing us a breezy Bob on stage with TP&H in July 1986. The main focus of this package seems to be spoken comments, although, following the first playing-to-the-gallery, fill-up-these-front-seats harangue, we're treated to a complete D / Petty duet of I Forgot More - and very nice too. Then, having introduced the band while dragging on a tab, D pulls a surprise on bassman Howie Epstein by instigating an impromptu rendition of Happy Birthday (with most of the singing from the Queens). There's even a large, candle-festooned cake on hand. Intros to Rolling Stone then In The Garden follow but, in each case, after Bob's words, the performance itself is cut at its first line. Yes, the remarks are worth hearing, but so, too, are the songs! (Find them on [D453.su](#).)



[1991](#)

THANKS Viner WCP

STARS Of moderate interest. Three.