



SOUND Excellent throughout.

IMAGE A stage-front, held-held film with all the usual drawbacks - rocky frame, ever-present heads, limited lateral access - but also at least some of the usual rewards. The screenshots below show how close the lens brings us to Bob's head (and *only* head - don't hope to see arms, chest or guitar). It also hints at significant screen-time for others, which is not the case. We glimpse Petty as he and D duet on LARS then catch rather more of McGuinn as he and Bob trade verses in Chimes. But the Queens, Campbell and Co. get a mere few seconds each. Picture quality varies between good / nicely coloured and fair.



RUNNING TIME Brussels - complete except for the opening lines of first encore song Blowin' - runs 77:25. Though the Baez bonus, a pro-shot (Sound Stage) one-verse snippet of Diamonds and Rust, plays barely more than a minute, it serves to close this DVD with both proper credits and a little Joanie joke.

PERFORMANCE Three nights and two shows on from his life-changing Locarno "epiphany" (see [D366.su](#) review) and what shape do we find Bob in? Well, you'd have to say not great. He's in good humour and his heart's in the right place, but his head (shaggy hessian hair tied all around) is somewhere west-south-west of Neptune. With an opening run of Des Row / LARS / Times he sets out his credentials - sixties has-been - then busks his way into the part with increasing conviction. Though Des Row, it must be said, is an audacious first pick. Has he ever opened with this best of songs before or since? I doubt it, and maybe with good reason, for this brisk and abbreviated four verse dash-through does justice to neither song nor singer, and so the mood is set for the duration. LARS is better, thanks mainly to the Heartbreakers, who contribute strongly all night, but Times is tackled in a camp, affected style that does it no favours and when in Serve Somebody (and later in Pledging and Animals too) he runs out of words, he's happy to drop in a verse of babble, which I always hate to see. I can get that any day down at the zoo. Is that really all these songs are worth, or all this or any audience deserves? Is this the Lord's work you're about here, Bob, and, if not, just who is it again you're serving? Hattie Carroll he keeps faith with, at least, with a solid, no-frills reading. But in Chimes (a straight cop by TP&H of Springsteen's bravura mid-eighties arrangement) McGuinn outsings his mentor and also (naturally) better remembers the lyrics. I And I is dark matter (schizophrenia) as bouncy reggae fun. Man Gave Names is knockabout nonsense in which D can't even be bothered to put in the last "snake" verse that gives the song some point. Listen in Don't Think Twice to how he sings *Where I'm bound I can't tell* - one of the few lines tonight from the heart. I Want You is replete with playful, sprightly riffing from both Bob (on harp) and the band, but again his vocal can't match the vigour and vitality of the sounds served up to frame it. Broken cup indeed.

HIGHLIGHTS LARS, Chimes (thanks mainly to McGuinn), Carroll.

COMMENT If, after the deluge, this was the only DVD of Bob that remained, it wouldn't bear witness to his undoubted greatness. There's no glimpse of it here, which makes this bad medicine. What we're treated to, rather, is a disembodied head tossing on a heaving, swelling black crowd sea, peeking above the waves, now up, now down, like a beleaguered soul in mortal peril - but smiling still. [D109.su](#) boasts a fetching soundtrack but, beyond an invitation to a hour or so's voyeurism, not much else. Not for the faint-hearted.

THANKS JL

STARS Two

