

D127.su PORTLAND, OR, 12 JUNE 1999

SOUND Very good

IMAGE Tonight's gig is in a modern (1995-built) twenty thousand seat sports arena. Fittingly, the stage the band play on is itself big as a basketball court, thus not conducive to that sense of intimacy that smaller venues naturally engender. And across to it from tonight's centre balcony camera position is a tolerably long reach. All the more lucky for us, then, that we see a film even half as presentable as this one. The screenshots below indicate faithfully what you can expect of [D127.su](#): whole-body Bob-centric shots mixed nicely with wider frames that take in some or all other players. Pictures are clean (none of the graininess that often accompanies high-zoom footage) and just delicately tinted. The notes appended to the DVDylan track-list (toggle blue link beneath it to view) make it clear that the original film had its share of both head and shake problems, but with the worst afflicted passages edited out in favour of stills, the impression given is of uniformly steady, head-free camerawork. Ace's authoring skills, always considerable, seem to improve with each job he tackles and transforming less than pristine source material into video as rewarding as this constitutes fine work indeed. Only visual reservation is lack of any closer look at our man, but this night in this venue the camera just couldn't do it. Highly commendable all the same.



RUNNING TIME 97:45, whole show, no tedious encore interludes.

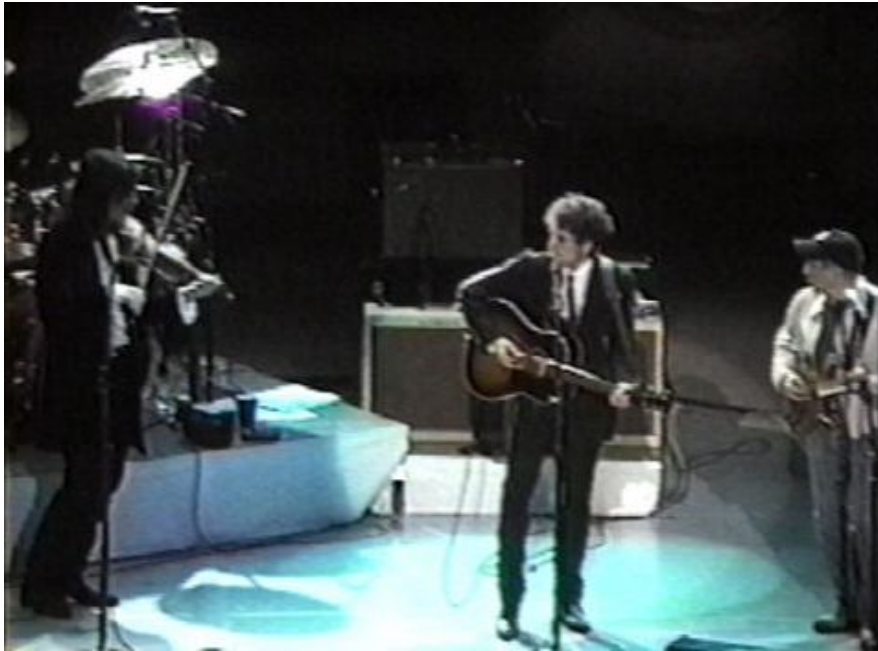
PERFORMANCE After taking over from the departed Bucky, Charlie's first gig as a *bone fide* Bobette was Denver, 5 June '99. Having previously guested four times himself between 1991 and 1996, he might not have been surprised to find Paul Simon sitting in for the last three numbers of his debut show. In fact, as Charlie would have been well aware, the eight week US tour that lay ahead - his first with the band, and

with Portland, Oregon its fifth stop - was nominally a series of D / Simon double headers. Odd, then, that a seemingly random four of the 37 dates after Denver would feature Bob and Co. only. Maybe PS, less road-hardened, couldn't stand the pace? Whether or not, in September he was back for more and he and D played a further ten dates together to make 43 shared bills for the year. (In all, Bob performed 120 times in '99 - a career high.) Several of the 43 gigs feature in the DVDylan catalogue. Before encountering [D127.su](#), my pick of those I've seen would have been [D288.su](#). (Actually, I'd place [D133.su](#) well ahead of that, though not for its D / Simon content.) Having now seen [D127.su](#) too, I'd say it's a match for, though perhaps no better than [D288.su](#), so try either one, or both, as you wish. Neither is likely to disappoint.



HIGHLIGHTS Bob tonight looks trim and feisty and though the set he plays is conservatively freighted with a few too many Greatest Hits bankers, it's enjoyable still. First slam-dunk is an exquisite North Country Girl, tender and true. Then, when the opening acoustic set ends with Tangled and the rest go electric for Watchtower, Charlie sticks with his Gibson, which adds to Bob's most-performed tune a welcome, extra, brighter dynamic (and, two cuts on, Mobile is played the same way). JLaw, slowed right down, is on the money and, though it's not among my *TOOM* favourites, I don't think I've ever yet been disappointed by a live Love Sick, with this edgy Portland reading no exception. After Bob is joined by "one of the great talents of the twentieth century" (D's words) we see contrasted once more in the shared-stage closing sequence Simon's solidity and serenity with D's antic, palsied restlessness. You feel that this pair would never gel if they played together till Doomsday. D - a Garfunkel-like appendage, almost (he's got the hair if not the voice) - contributes minimally to Silence especially. Show-stealer, meanwhile, is Larry, whose lush steel guitar lights up that song before, with sprightly country fiddle (pic below), he breathes life into the otherwise turgid Walk / Blue Moon medley that follows. Heaven's Door remains, thankfully, Mother And Child Reunion insert-free (*cf*, for instance, [D133.su](#)) and all the better for it.

COMMENT The gig ends strangely. Are you going away with no word of farewell? Tonight, it seems, yes.



THANKS Author, viner and all-round good egg GS.

STARS A solid four

