

D182 STILL DREAMIN' YET

Within ten seconds of this DVD starting, you know you're in for a treat. Picture is fine (few odd blips later on); sound, if not the best then near enough; intimate setting - a smoky, club-like atmosphere; camera rock-steady and close to the stage; a clear view of Bob, who's standing full-on to his audience, mike in hand, no guitar, no nothing - just a man (plus band) and his song. That song is Flood and so off we go on a joyous, bumper-free ride through 105 minutes of Spring '95 Bob-at-his-best, up for the game, knocking 'em in at will, harmonica to the fore (always a good sign), Señor (like Flood) sung without guitar, reserve or flaw. Song after song does the business - a slow-rocking Tombstone Blues, a Shelter that starts tender then builds in intensity, an exquisite guitar-free T Man (since its release, my favourite version of this was always the one on *BS5*, but this comes very close). Hattie Carroll is fine, then a lovely meditative Baby Blue (much without picture, though it hardly matters) raises the bar higher still. In The Garden sits very incongruously between H61 and Joey - D at his most inscrutable, dropping in a song about "his hero" (D047) and with an edge to it not previously evident. Maybe he played everything else this night to please us and that to please himself? It scores all the same. Joey, too, though inevitably somewhat abridged, is still powerful and insistent, D hammering home the final chorus with sweat flying off his head.



Though he actually sounds anything but, D looks jaded tonight. Considering this is the 627th show of the NET and only three weeks on from a rare sickness-induced cancellation, is it really any wonder? You might recall at the end of *Last Waltz* Robbie Robertson (who's well-placed to know) dismissing life on the road as "impossible" - yet still Bob pursues such a life relentlessly, with a determination that's almost scary; that has about it an air almost of fatalism. He shows up at these venues to thrill us or not, depending on how we're all feeling, then he's gone and, for much of each year, that's his lot. I've seen Jack Elliott described as an American national treasure (and so

he is) but it's perhaps too easy to forget that, in his own way, and though he may not want to hear it, so is Bob. Precisely because it's so liberally distributed, it's too easy, maybe, to take for granted his fulsome prodigality, his incredible generosity of spirit; all he does for us and all he gives.



Back to the gig. Want to know who's in the band tonight? Tough luck! Before LARS we get this:

Thank you! Forgot to introduce the band. Not going to, either!

But, named or anonymous, the band are tight, D's now in fine voice and this is another song right on the money. Then comes a faithful, heartfelt Pages that stands in stark contrast to the throwaway reading he'll deliver at the House of Blues (D006) in sixteen months time. Elvis Costello, Chrissie Hynde and Carole King join Bob on stage for the last two numbers (pics below) and, as often, the presence of guests opens him up even more, making Released and RDW a fun-filled, upbeat pair to close on. D plainly enjoys singing with EC and the last words we hear on this DVD are Bob-to-crowd:

Elvis Costello - ain't he great?

You too, pal. You too.



BIG THANKS SS

STARS The full five. (Other beauts from this best of tours include [D085.suu](#), [D357.su](#) and [D703.su](#). Jump in!)