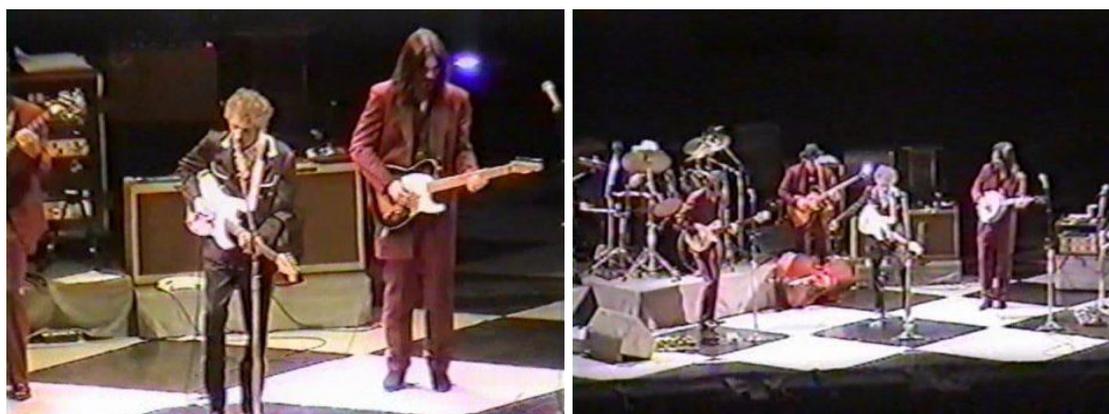


SOUND Bell-clear, superb

IMAGE Tonight's cameraman takes full advantage of a perfect, wholly unobstructed, just left-of-centre balcony position to bag loads of fine film. Handling is once again impressively accomplished, with in, out and all around all silky smooth. Author Ace has improved on the original, principally with a lengthy patch in John Brown plus assorted other odd fixes here and there to give a finished product that's enjoyably watchable throughout. Everyone individually and collectively gets lots of good screen time. In addition, every once in a while we pull back to see stage plus players floating surreally in black nothing, like a dream-scene out of *The Big Lebowski*. Images are nicely coloured although, due to repeat copying, a bit smudgy (my copy didn't look nearly as clean as the screenshots below suggest). But, as anyone who's seen the '65 SF Press Conference will know, any attempt to diminish D by multi-dubbing is likely to fail. His then 24 year old epicene beauty shines through even the most washed-out, wasted film (dubs cannot wither him ...) and if the passage of 36 more (lotta water under the bridge, lotta other stuff too) has taken its inevitable toll in that department - for even he's no Dorian Gray - still a few tape generations down does little real harm. Once more, then, it's well done that taper. Without you and your kind ... (See, too, COMMENT below.)



RUNNING TIME Disc One (which, in a nice touch, ends at the show's intermission): 101 minutes. Disc Two: 39:20. A to Z, all there.

PERFORMANCE Second cut Me Babe, mellow and slow, sets the tone for the night - this is a show of understated, less-is-more brilliance. D's vocal in that song is deliciously lugubrious (you'll just have to hear it). He then closes an already fine performance with 2:25 of knees-bent, head-down, heart-blown harmonica - just fabulous. You can watch him and know that here's a man who, at 60, has finally arrived at the place he's been heading towards all his life - and see in him, too, living proof of his own words: age doesn't matter in the end, it's all about the music. And how fully, between them, this band realise it. Song after song they inhabit comfortably, like a suit of favourite clothes - but casual or sloppy? No, nothing, no how. Each gets a reading, rather, relaxed and easy, yes, but vital. New album *L&T* supplies a generous six picks and all of them - even the least readily accessible such as Tweedles or High Water - are brought sparkingly to life. Don't Think Twice gets a featherlight

accompaniment that befits its lyric far better than the hay-ride romp of yore (check out D120.su for a typical example). John Brown, offered against another spare, minimalist backdrop, comes on almost like a poetry reading (Health Warning: **I can write you poems make a strong man lose his mind** - BD, 2001). So little here misses - only Tangled is tired and Cold Irons remains the same cacophonous trial it usually is. (I understand there are people out there who actually *like* CIB. Different strokes ...)



COMMENT As I sit and watch this great show, I have to ask why doesn't it come in a box with *Sony* or *Columbia* stamped all over it and why do Bob and his kind feel the need to gripe about bootleggers? As the number of NET concerts edges towards the 2000 mark (that's a *lot* of music!) what official legacy is offered? We can watch *MTV Unplugged*, or most of *Bangladesh* (only 35 years late) and there are four or five live NET tracks on that Japanese 2001 CD compilation release (*Country Pie* and *Cold Irons Bound* - whoo-*HOOH!*). I assume Bob's people audiotape most if not all his gigs, but there's nothing to suggest that more than a very few are videotaped. So when he's come to town and given a show like this extraordinary Philly one, what's left behind? Beyond a fast-fading memory in the minds of those lucky enough to have been there, and a tape in a vault, not much - *except for the ever-growing pile of precious riches here at DVDylan*. So instead of grouching about all the filmers and tapers, Bob and Co. should rather acknowledge the huge debt they owe to the folk who go out of their way to do this fine and important thing - this act of *preservation* (for that's first and foremost what it is). In fifty years time, people will be extremely grateful that there was ever a DVDylan. But will they be saying the same about Columbia? D may not care about his name and reputation (though I don't believe that either) but others recognise and readily accept its true significance. After seeing Bob's 2003 London shows, Gerry Smith wrote:

Dylan should be judged ... by reference to the musical giants from all genres - Mozart, Bach, Miles Davis, Louis Armstrong, Callas - and against the great writers in all media, from all eras - Shakespeare, Joyce, Goethe, Cervantes ...

Too much? Maybe - but only maybe. Meantime, back in the here and now, where would we all be without this wonderful site? All who read this, ensure you treasure it well.

THANKS Viner (and more) GS

STARS An easy five