

SOUND Sweet

IMAGE Some tapers enjoy easier, more advantageous positions than others, some have better cameras, and luck - Bob's mood, choice of headwear, the night's lighting policy, security interventions - will always play a part. But, having said that, while the best tapers seem to wield their rig like a paintbrush, transcending their environment to beguile your eyes with languid, apparently effortless artistry, for others filming appears more of a struggle, a bout of man-fights-camera with the winner not always clear. And tonight's is one of those. From up in the left-side tiered seats, we're bequeathed footage with some judder, some waver, a couple of protracted roof-and-floor passages and incomplete to boot. Between-times, though, it's not bad: steady, unobstructed, a nice mix (see screenshots below) of in and out, pics not exactly sharp or fine-toned but good enough. All in all, worthwhile.



RUNNING TIME 116 minutes, including three minutes downtime after Thin Man, then - coquettish or what? - a further two and a half after H61 and two more after Forever Young. Gig is audio-complete with film liberally patched to suit.

PERFORMANCE 1997 was a momentous year for D - a year in which he recorded then released an album strong enough not only to win three coveted Grammys* but, more, to restore his ragged reputation. There was the small matter of six tours, 94 shows across three continents, with an early summer histoplasma hiatus and a September audience with the Pope thrown in for good measure. But the year's most significant decision came early on, in March, when the vacancy created by JJ's departure let in 42 year old New York session man Larry Campbell. Here on D203.su we see him in just his third week with the band and looking less than sure of his bearings. His guitar playing is competent but often tentative. The fiddle he adds to

Friend Of The Devil colours the song but D won't give him any hint of a look-in, never mind a verse in which to step it up and go. This Larry hasn't yet flowered into the key player (think [D218.su](#), [D044.su](#), several others) he will eventually become. Maybe it's that Bob hasn't worked out yet how to get the best from him; hasn't yet taken his measure. Maybe it will take Bucky's leaving too. Either way, it *will* be worth the wait. As for D himself, whilst animated and apparently engaged, he too plays for the most part in a curiously perfunctory manner. Thus extended rock-outs in T Blues and Thin Man fail to convince and only in H61 do the band finally, belatedly, catch fire.



HIGHLIGHTS D always seems to relish singing Pretty Peggy-O (*Your cities I will BURN ...*) and tonight's is another beaut. Nowhere starts badly but comes good (introducing us along the way to Genghis Khan and all his sheep!), Shooting Star sounds the part (no film till the play-out comes around) and RDW concludes matters with a flourish.

COMMENTS The author of this disc has contributed more to the DVDylan community in 2006 than any other member. His sterling work deserves high praise and due recognition and if the site had a Man Of The Year, he'd get my vote for sure. What's more, his reason for doing what he does - "to (help) preserve the historical record" - is neither pretentious, over-egged nor in any other way suspect. Though detractors, sceptics and non-believers may scoff, I agree 100% with that stated aim. But to acknowledge the importance of one's work then to reflect that standard only intermittently in the course of it seems to me bizarre and I'd like respectfully to suggest three ways in which said standard might be improved. First, when patching, be more rigorous. The lurching, rocking, reeling tours of the lighting rig we're treated to here during tracks five and six might profitably have been excised? I don't suggest that every bloop or skid is cut out, but when it comes to extensive passages of wayward footage such as these, why keep 'em? It's worth remembering that fills, thoughtfully composed, may become art in themselves. Though the author should not try to

compete with or outdo the featured artist, he can (should) surely seek to complement his work with taste and a deft touch? Which brings me to point two (you may have heard this before, and may well again) which is that flashing / pulsating patches are *horrible* - not in keeping with the material (or is this Kiss we're watching?), not pleasant to look at (which defeats the object, doesn't it?) and, given the context above, altogether inexplicable. Third, with 7:30 of applause to sit through here, how about some editing in this area too? Its presence to some degree is arguably important to reflect the way D structures the show. But if the three episodes here were trimmed to (say) 30 seconds each, the point would be made without outstaying its welcome, as happens in the event all too often.



THANKS Black Cat

STARS A borderline four. For better, try D125.su from the previous night or D715.su from the 28th.

* *TOOM* Grammy successes included Best Male Rock Vocal (for Cold Irons Bound) and Album Of The Year. Meanwhile, One Headlight won Best Rock Song for Bob's son Jakob (who wrote it) and Best Rock Vocal By A Duo Or Group for The Wallflowers, who recorded it. So a remarkable (unique?) father / son Best Vocal double. It's a Family Affair ... Now, for ten bonus points, name the only CD that both of them appear on (for a hint, see D044, track 16).