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Record Review

The Band overshadows Dylan's talent

Sometime in mid-1967 an underground legend was born - Bob Dylan. Unfortunately though, it is nearly impossible to live up to a legend. *The Basement Tapes* is unlikely to become a Dylan classic along the same lines as *Highway 61 Revisited*. Nor does it provide a clear development between the seeming hours of metaphors that prevailed *Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands* and the near-traditional ballads of *John Wesley Harding*. The album is, in fact, an anomaly: it's obviously Dylan but it's certainly a Dylan I never expected to hear.

The Basement Tapes was constructed during an eighteen month recording session in "The Band's" basement studio. In the ensuing months of silence from Dylan these recordings assumed a mysterious stature: just what was the cultural hero doing? To Dylan's many fans these songs became even more important when his next "official" releases

appeared almost country and western. (For instance, can you believe a duet with Johnny Cash?)

To their minds, these recordings seemed to represent some sort of transition period leading to an abrupt stylistic change; a change both confusing and distasteful to his more politically radical listeners. Consequently, the tapes were bootlegged and all who wanted to hear them did.

The reason for the change in approach, I think, is due to the presence of "The Band". For the only time in their recorded musical relationship "The Band" seems to dominate Dylan. Despite the fact that he wrote or co-wrote two-thirds of the album, the songs contain heavy stylistic overtones of "The Band". Most of the lyrics sound as though they could have come from the pen of Robbie Robertson - no mean compliment, even for Dylan. This shows the signal importance of "The Band" in altering Dylan's style, which is surprising considering

that it was Dylan who seemed to lead most musical changes in rock in the '60's.

The sound quality is excellent, far better than the bootleg versions that I have heard. As for the music, even those misguided souls who ignore the talent of "The Band" might find their earlier judgments a trifle hasty. The album may not contain Dylan masterpieces (if your appreciation stops at "Like a Rolling Stone" and "Absolutely 4th Street") but it does contain classics (again, more along the line of "The Band" classics with Dylan providing touching vocals). All in all, it does contain an excellent overall treatment of the songs.

Finally, for those whose initial reaction might be "Yeah, it's Dylan, good Dylan, but is it great Dylan?"; the album does grow on you. Given another month of listening, I might just answer "yes" to that question.

John Owen Robert Ferris



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1 graduate |
| 2. Pollution Committee
3 students | 6. Library Committee
1 graduate |
| 3. Nominating Committee
1 undergrad GFC representative | 7. Parking Appeals
1 graduate |
| 4. Council on Student Affairs
2 undergrads
1 graduate | 8. Academic Development Committee
1 graduate |
| | 9. Ad Hoc Committee to Examine Writing Skills of Undergraduate Students
2 students |

Course Guide Editor

FUNCTIONS - Work with Faculties, Student Faculty Associations and Student Council's Academic Affairs Board to develop questions suitable for use in a course guide questionnaire.

- Work out administrative procedures for gathering and processing data.

FURTHER INFORMATION - Gene Borys (Vice-President, Finance and Administration) - 432-4236.

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