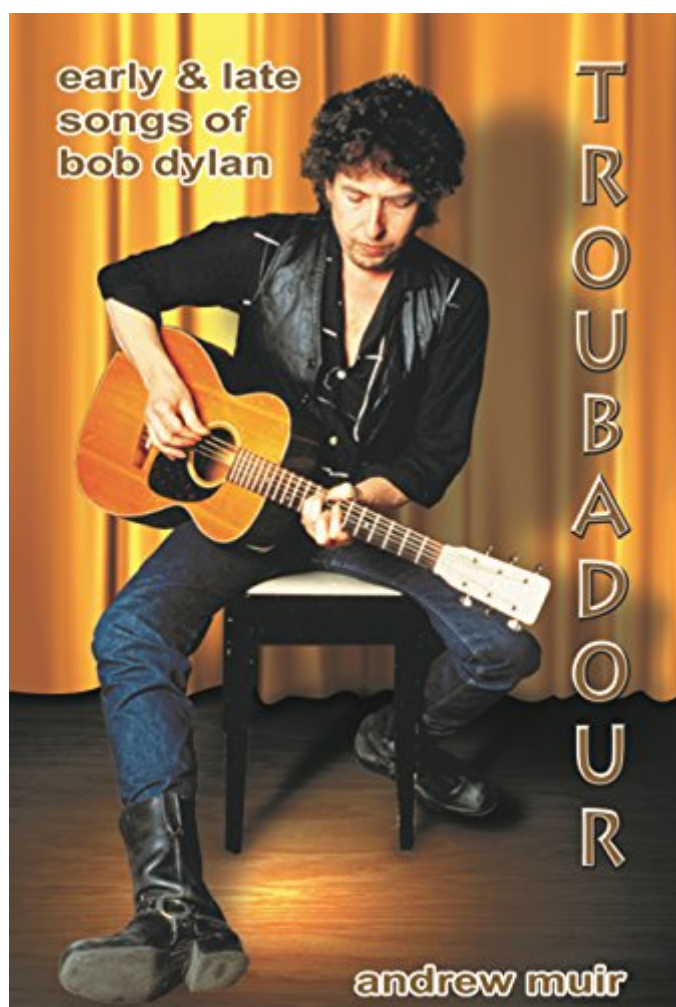


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Troubadour: Songs Of Bob Dylan



Synopsis

Troubadour is a study of Bob Dylan's lyrics. The areas of Dylan's writing covered include the early 'protest' and relationship songs, his mid-sixties explosion of poetic song tied to a classic rock beat, and a more mature look at relationships from the album Blood On The Tracks. Then the second part of the book examines how the later Dylan has created a new song-writing style; a process that began with the nursery-rhyme-drenched Under the Red Sky and evolved via his two nineties cover albums to emerge on Time Out Of Mind and fully flower on 2001's triumphant return to top form, "Love and Theft". The book begins with an extremely good, substantial introduction discussing the thorny questions of performance versus words in Dylan's art, which he covers very thoroughly and with great alertness of judgement. And does so in a fresh tone of voice, which is quite an achievement. That hugely valuable freshness steps up a whole other level when he looks anew at "Blowin' in the Wind". It's a main strength of the book that Muir refocusses on exactly the songs we most take for granted and so largely fail to hear. Indeed he has tackled "Blowin' in the Wind" better than anyone has ever done: bringing out, and with genuine vigour, not only the whys and hows of its original impact but equally well the enduring subtleties and intelligence of the song. At the other end of Troubadour is a very substantial scrutiny of the "Love and Theft" album, with some invaluable tracking of what has been loved and thieved from where, assiduously footnoted yet assembled with all the enthusiasm prompted by the newness and excellence of the album." Michael Gray, "The Bob Dylan Encyclopaedia"

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Customer Reviews

I highly recommend anyone interested in Bob Dylan's music, at any level, to buy Troubadour by Andrew Muir. It is a must for the shelves of all Dylan fans! This book has been a favourite of mine for many years. It is no easy task to write a book about Bob Dylan's songs that is both filled with depth, and is also an entertaining and engaging read. However, this book delivers. Andrew Muir is one of the best writers about Bob Dylan around at the moment. He skilfully discusses Dylan's music in a personal way, very detailed and informative, guiding us to look at the songs in a new light, while maintaining a style that is enjoyable and erudite. The book elucidates and expands the reader's understanding in an open and refreshing, often humorous, narrative. The writing flows easily and is a joy to read. Intelligent and full of depth, but without bogging the reader down in pedantry. The author's personal joy and connection with the music is reminiscent of Paul Williams's approach in feeling, but the content is unique and has its own charming voice. Mr. Muir shows deep appreciation and understanding of poetic expression, the traditions of literature, the influences upon Bob Dylan's phrasing, and the wonderful subtlety and inferences that are often achieved by Dylan in live performances by emphasising or altering / omitting specific words. Vocal effects, delays and pauses, timing and emphasis, metaphor and allusion... the book is a tour de force in studying what makes Bob Dylan's songs so meaningful to listeners, as well as what makes Dylan's writing so complex and significant. Muir is never dry, never overbearing, always interesting and accessible.

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