

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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Hoosier Dylan ? Review

Written by David on February, 15 2010

Regional musicians celebrate Dylan's legacy

An especially rich and talented ensemble of 22 singers, musicians and a poet gathered Friday night at the Strand Theatre to celebrate the eclectic genius of Bob Dylan.

It was a show that musically defined why Dylan is more than mere legend and how this maestro of Minnesota is still able to inspire new generations as he musically morphed from a folk singer to hipster to electronic hippie and then became a guru of grunge. All these styles, plus several more Dylanesque incarnations, were on display Friday night at the Strand in 'Hoosier Dylan,' a show conceived by Tim Grimm.

The show opened with the reflective harmonies and mellow, rapturous voice of Bobbie Lancaster singing alongside the rich throat of Jennie DeVoe. Nearly 50 songs and more than four hours later this entertaining, educational exploration of Dylan's massive repertoire of musical styles ended as 20-some performers packed to the stage to sing 'Like a Rolling Stone.' In between, the music ranged from bluegrass to folk, blues, children's songs, classic hits and even a spoken word tribute to the beatnik bard by Indiana Poet Laureate Norbert Krapf.

Krapf's spoken ode to Dylan, 'the Voice,' was a proper, fitting tribute to the man who fused lyricism, social protest and music into a new genre. 'I really push to reunite poetry and music and what a great format this is for that,' Krapf said.

Musically, Shelbyville was represented on stage Friday night by 'the Complete Unknowns,' whose rousing, thumping, pounding electric folk rock songs of the early Dylan energized the audience.

It was, however, the women, DeVoe and Lancaster, accompanied by lead guitarist Gordon Bonham, who opened the eyes and ears of the crowd to Dylan's stylistic gyrations. First, Lancaster of Bloomington, recalled Dylan's early socially significant ballads with 'Masters of War,' a song sung with a sweet voice of righteous anger that wiled angelic and indignant. DeVoe, for her part, concentrated on the blues tunes of Dylan, in her haunting, spellbinding version of 'Man in a long Black Coat.'

While immensely enjoyable, these two rather expected styles of Dylan merely warmed up the audience for two eye-opening acts that displayed the wide ranging legacy and cross generational influence of Dylan's musical evolutions.

The initial shock came from the 'White Lightning Boys,' a band from Brown County who escorted the crowd into Dylan's forays into country music, especially bluegrass. This band brought the gritty, down-home, earthy styles of Dylan with their controlled frenzy of fine picking, plucking, strumming and full-finger playing of traditional bluegrass.

The other often unexpected manifestation of Dylan as godfather of grunge music was highlighted a band of Columbus East High School students: 'Joyous Garde.' This band played some later, heavier more electrified songs of Dylan, as well as a few classics that were written and recorded several generations before these musicians were born.

All-in-all, 'Hoosier Dylan,' was a masterful musical retrospective and it is obvious that each band, musician or singer have mastered one or more styles of Dylan and his multitalented, perversely rebellious take on music and musicianship.

Friday night's finale, 'Like a Rolling Stone' was literally a wall of sound vocally, visually and musically as this talented ensemble gathered on stage for a final romp through the eclectic tomes of Dylan in a show of truly epic proportions that ended with a standing ovation.

Submitted by: Terrance Aldridge

This independent review does not express the opinion of the Strand Theatre.

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