Bob Dylan - Blonde on Blonde (1966)



1. "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35"
2. "Pledging My Time"
3. "Visions of Johanna"
4. "One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)"
5. "I Want You"
6. "Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again"
7. "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat"
8. "Just Like a Woman"
9. "Most Likely You Go Your Way and I'll Go Mine"
10. "Temporary Like Achilles"
11. "Absolutely Sweet Marie"
12. "4th Time Around"
13. "Obviously 5 Believers"
14. "Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands"
Personnel: - Bob Dylan – vocals, guitar, harmonica, piano - Bill Atkins – keyboards - Robbie Robertson – guitar, vocals - Rick Danko – bass, violin, vocals (not on final album) - Garth Hudson – keyboards, saxophone (not on final album) - Richard Manuel – drums, keyboards, Vocals (not on final album) - Charlie McCoy – bass, guitar, harmonica, trumpet - Al Kooper – organ, guitar, horn, keyboards - Hargus "Pig" Robbins – piano, keyboards - Paul Griffin – piano - Kenneth A. Buttrey – drums - Sanford Konikoff – drums - Joe South – guitar - Jerry Kennedy – guitar - Wayne Moss – guitar, Vocals - Henry Strzelecki – bass - Wayne Butler – trombone - Bob Johnston – producer

Bob Dylan released Blonde On Blonde in 1966 and in many ways it completed and culminated the first phase of his career. A motorcycle accident would separate this release from his next which would find a far different Dylan.

Rolling Stone Magazine ranked this album as the ninth greatest album of all time, which may be too low. This is one of the rare double albums that should not have been a single disc. In many ways it established double disc releases as a viable commercial entity as it achieved double platinum status. The songs bring to a completion the musical advances begun on Bringing It All Back Home and Highway 61 Revisited. Personally I place Blonde On Blonde at the top of the Bob Dylan pantheon.

Dylan continued to record with a variety of rock musicians. Charlie McCoy returns to bring his country guitar to this release as did keyboardist Al Kooper. More important to his future are the appearances of Danko, Robertson, Hudson, and Manuel who would go on to form four fifths the Rock 'N' Roll Hall Of Fame group, The Band, who would play such an important part in his subsequent career.

In many ways Blonde On Blonde is Dylan's least disciplined album as he lets his imagination run wild. There is no overall theme or direction but there is wit, sarcasm, melody, imagery and even some wonderful love songs along the way.

The words, "Everybody Must Get Stoned," begin the musical journey as part of the upbeat and offbeat "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35." Just check out Proverbs 27:15. "Pledging My Love" is a blues song that Dylan would morph away from during the next part of his career. "Visions Of Johanna" is a poignant love song about things always just out of reach. "One Of Us Must Know (Sooner Or Later)" is Dylan in the confessional. And this is just side one of the first disc. The gems continue throughout the album. "Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again" is just a joyful romp. "Leopard Skin Pill-Box Hat" is Dylan at his humorous best. This bluesy song is filled with memorable images "Just Like A Woman," with its unique vocal delivery, is one of Dylan's most covered songs. "Most Likely You Go Your Way (And I'll Go Mine)" is a song of parting or getting rid of; take your choice. The serious content is hidden in an upbeat tempo. "Absolutely Sweet Marie" find Dylan in all out rock mode with guitars and organ in support.

"Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands" concludes the album and takes up the whole fourth side of the original release. This eleven plus minute opus is a hypnotic ode to his wife Sara.

Blonde On Blonde is a scattered and ultimately brilliant look into the musical mind of Bob Dylan. It remains a fascinating listen four decades later and is legitimately recongnized as one of the best albums in history. ---David Bowling, blogcritics.org

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