

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Bob Dylan

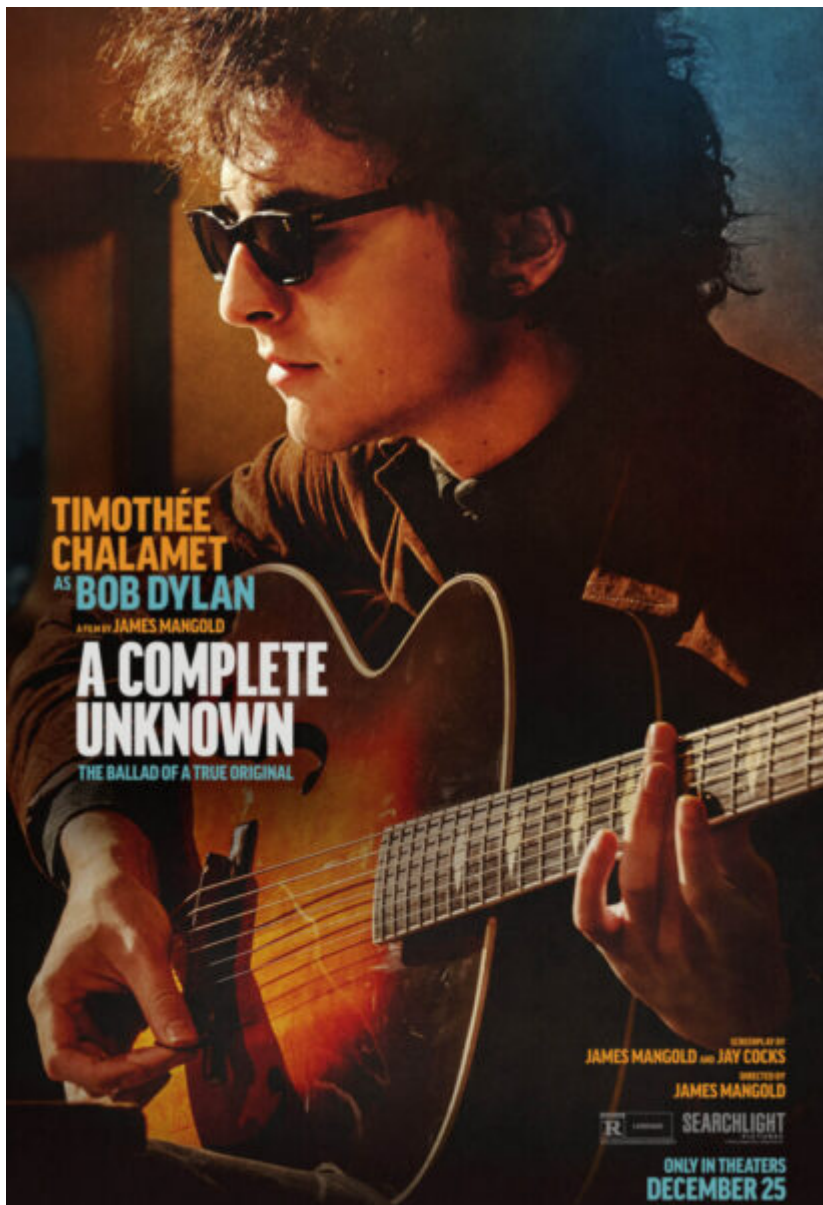
Elisa Leonelli · Thursday, December 19th, 2024

Bob Dylan is portrayed by Timothée Chalamet in *A Complete Unknown* directed by James Mangold.

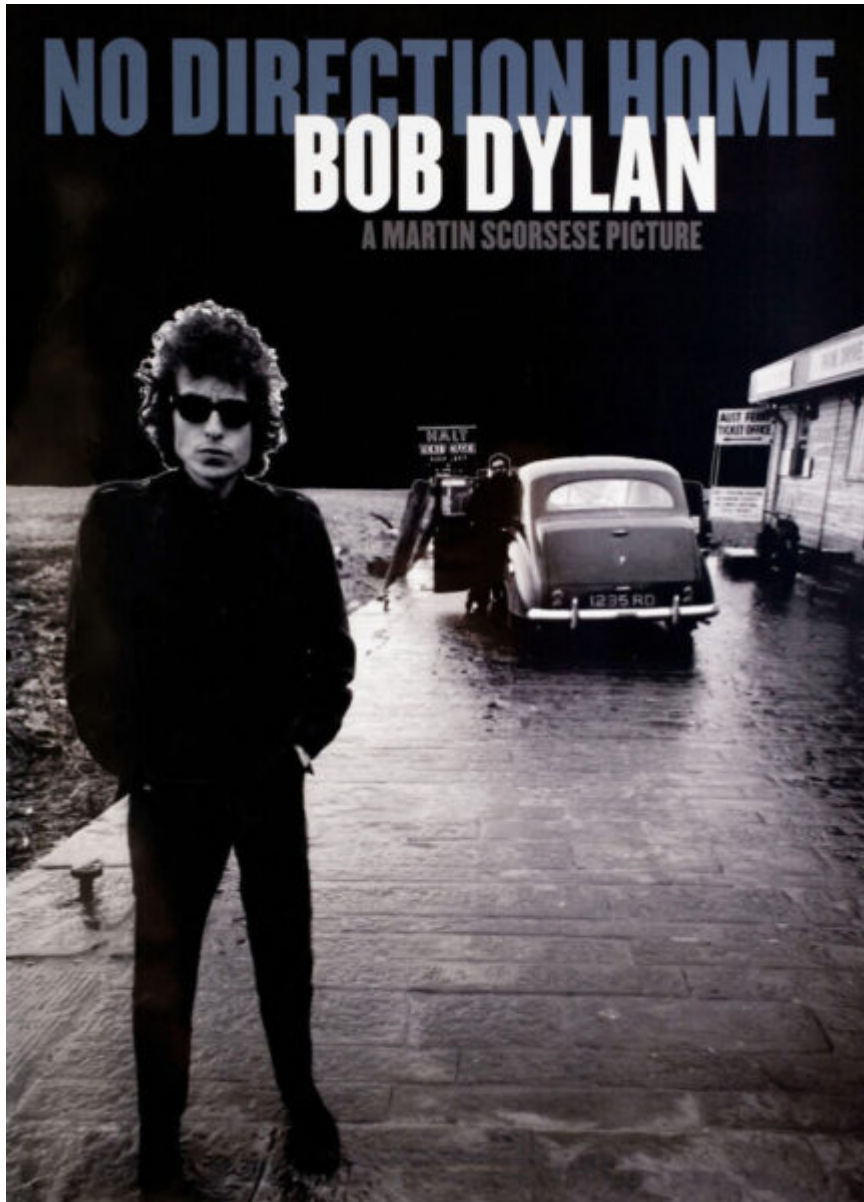


Not being very familiar with the singer-poet early protest songs, because I lived in Italy until 1971, I researched them. I link a few videos, complete lyrics and select words that may be inspiring today

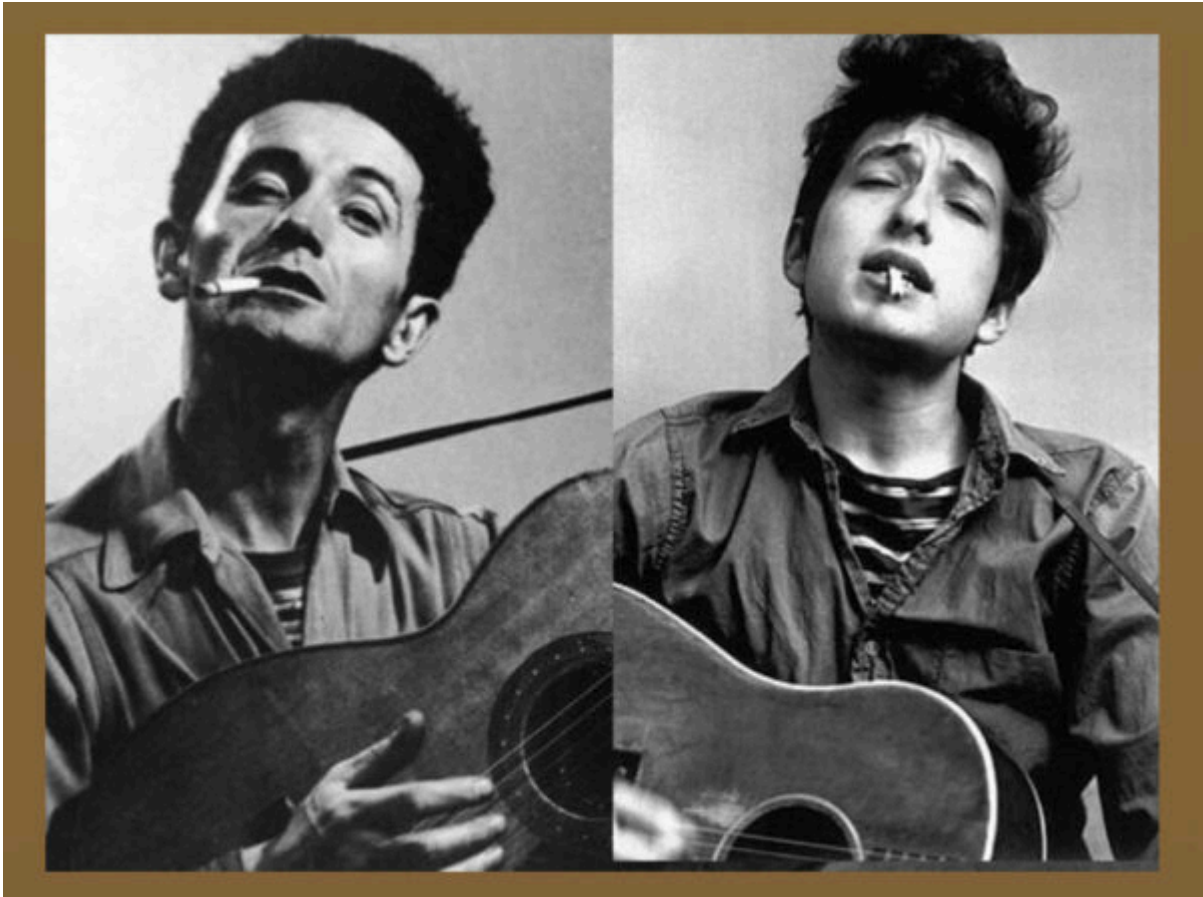
in Trump's America, while two wars are raging, in Ukraine, invaded by Russia, and in Gaza, destroyed by Israel.



“Like a Rolling Stone,” 1965 has the refrain “How does it feel, to be on your own, with no direction home, like a complete unknown?” These 3 words were chosen for the title of the movie, based on the 2015 book by Elijah Wald *Dylan Goes Electric! Newport, Seeger, Dylan, and the Night That Split the Sixties*. Read all the [lyrics](#), [watch](#) Dylan sing it at the Newport Folk Festival on July 25, 1965.



It's from this song that Martin Scorsese titled his 2005 Bob Dylan documentary *No Direction Home*.



Woody Guthrie-Bob Dylan

“[Song to Woody](#),” 1961, released in Bob Dylan’s 1962 debut album, was composed as an homage to his biggest inspiration, [Woody Guthrie](#). One of the verses “Hey, hey, Woody Guthrie, I wrote you a song, About a funny old world that’s a-coming along. Seems sick and it’s hungry, it’s tired and it’s torn. It looks like it’s a-dying and it’s hardly been born.” Listen to [official audio](#) with lyrics. [Pete Seeger](#) was impressed by this “hell of a song” and introduced Dylan to the Greenwich Village folk music scene.



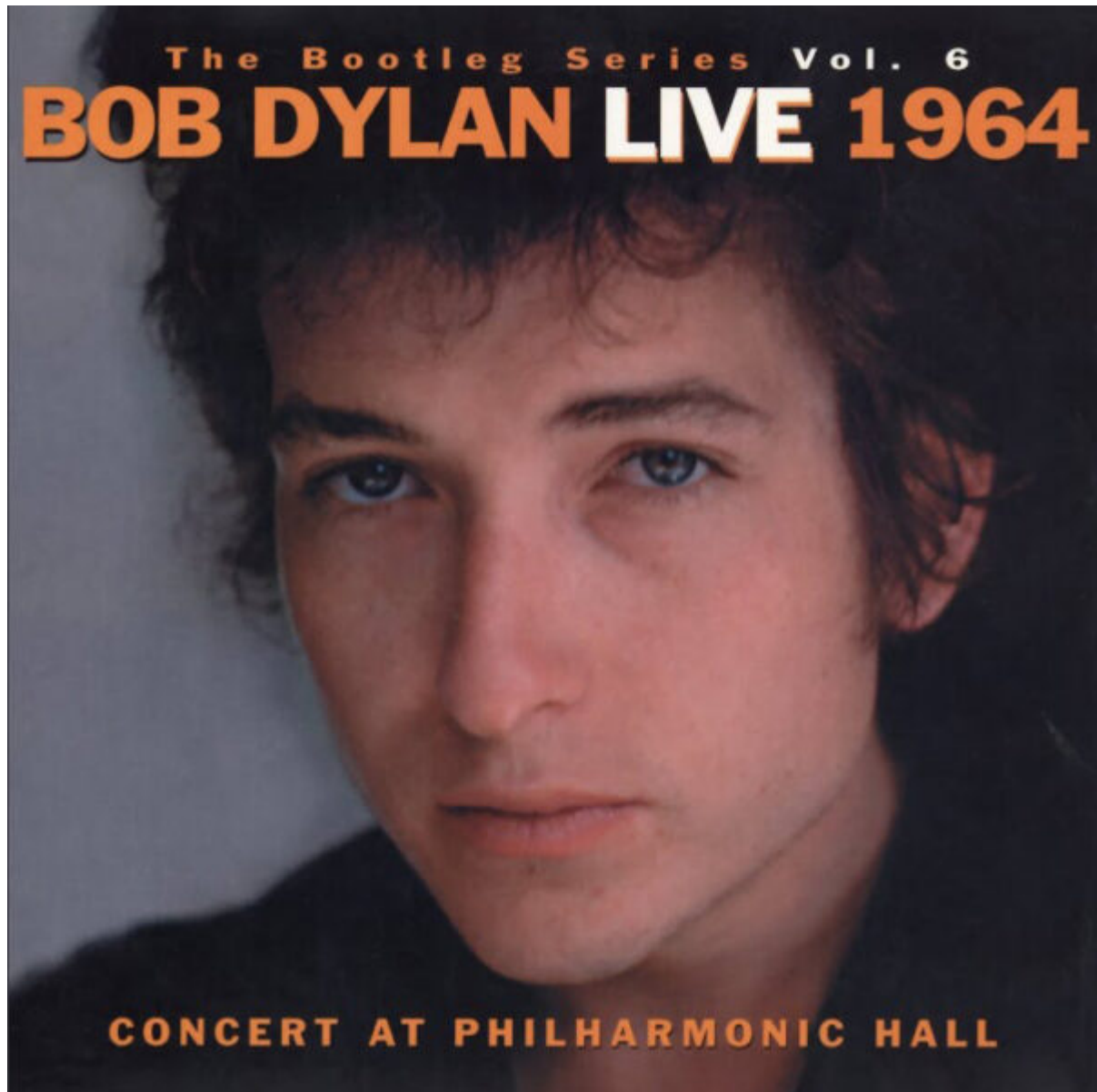
“[Blowin’ in the Wind](#),” 1962. A couple of lines: “How many ears must one man have before he can hear people cry? And how many deaths will it take till he knows that too many people have died?” Read all the [lyrics](#), [watch Dylan](#) sing it live on TV in March 1963.

“[Masters of War](#),” 1962. The first verse: “Come, you masters of war, you that build the big guns, you that build the death planes, you that build all the bombs, you that hide behind walls, you that hide behind desks, I just want you to know I can see through your masks.” Read the [8 verses](#), watch [official video](#).



The two songs above were included in the 1963 album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, where the singer is photographed with girlfriend [Suze Rotolo](#) on the cover.

“[Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues](#)” 1963, a satire of the red scare, was not included in the album because deemed too controversial. Some lyrics: “Now we all agree with Hitler’s views. Although he killed six million Jews, it don’t matter too much that he was a Fascist. At least you can’t say he was a Communist! Now Eisenhower, he’s a Russian spy, Lincoln, Jefferson and that Roosevelt guy.” [Read](#) all the 10 verses, [listen](#) to Dylan sing it at Carnegie Hall, October 1963.



“[Only a Pawn in Their Game](#)” 1963. Dylan sang it at the March on Washington on August 28, had composed it as a commentary to the murder of [Medgar Evers](#) on June 12. Like Joan Baez he was a vocal supporter of the Civil Rights Movement. Here’s some words: “A south politician preaches to the poor white man, you got more than the blacks, don’t complain, you’re better than them, you been born with white skin.” Read the complete [lyrics](#), [watch](#) Dylan sing it at Newport Folk Festival, July 26, 1963.



Joan Baez, Bob Dylan

“[With God on Our Side](#),” 1963. One of the 9 verses: “The Second World War. Came to an end. We forgave the Germans. And then we were friends. Though they murdered six million. In the ovens they fried.” Read all the [lyrics](#). [Watch](#) a young Dylan sing it with Joan Baez at the Newport Folk Festival July 26, 1963.



“The Times They Are A-Changin’,” released in the 1964 album by the same title. Some lines “Come senators, congressmen, please heed the call. Don’t stand in the doorway, don’t block up the hall. The battle outside ragin’ will soon shake your windows and rattle your walls.” Read the [lyrics](#), [watch](#) Dylan sing it in 1965.

For more info on Bob Dylan click on [his website](#).

Watch the documentary *Dont Look Back* about Dylan’s England tour of 1965



I conclude with a more explicitly political song written by [Joan Baez](#) in 2017, “Nasty Man” about Donald Trump. [Watch](#) her sing it and read the lyrics, such as “You’ve got dangerous pathological disorders.”

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