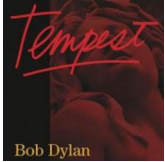


Bob Dylan - Tempest (2012)

Written by bluelover

Friday, 14 September 2012 16:46 - Last Updated Sunday, 10 July 2016 21:28

Bob Dylan - Tempest (2012)



1. Duquesne Whistle 2. Soon After Midnight 3. Narrow Road 4. Long And Wasted Years 5. Pay In Blood 6. Scarlet Town 7. Early Roman Kings 8. Tin Angel 9. Tempest 10. Roll On John

Bob Dylan describes *Tempest*, his 35th studio album (out September 11th), as a record where "anything goes and you just gotta believe it will make sense." But it isn't the record he set out to make. "I wanted to make something more religious," he says. "I just didn't have enough [religious songs]. Intentionally, specifically religious songs is what I wanted to do. That takes a lot more concentration to pull that off 10 times with the same thread – than it does with a record like I ended up with."

The "anything goes" album he ended up with is full of big stories, big endings and transfixing effect. The disc was recorded in Jackson Browne's studio in L.A. with Dylan's touring band – bassist Tony Garnier, drummer George G. Receli, steel guitarist Donnie Herron, and guitarists Charlie Sexton and Stu Kimball – as well as David Hidalgo on guitar, violin and accordion. "Tin Angel" is a devastating tale of a man in search of his lost love; the doleful "Soon After Midnight" seems to be about love (but maybe it's revenge); the vengeful "Pay in Blood" has Dylan darkly repeating, "I pay in blood, but not my own." Tenderness finally seals *Tempest*, in "Roll On, John," Dylan's heartfelt tribute to his friend John Lennon.

The title track is a nearly 14-minute depiction of the Titanic disaster. Numerous folk and gospel songs gave accounts of the event, including the Carter Family's "The Titanic," which Dylan drew from. "I was just fooling with that one night," he says. "I liked that melody – I liked it a lot. 'Maybe I'm gonna appropriate this melody.' But where would I go with it?" Elements of Dylan's vision of the Titanic are familiar – historical figures, the inescapable finality. But it's not all grounded in fact: The ship's decks are places of madness ("Brother rose up against brother. They fought

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and slaughtered each other"), and even Leonardo DiCaprio appears. ("Yeah, Leo," says Dylan. "I don't think the song would be the same without him. Or the movie.") "People are going to say, 'Well, it's not very truthful,'" says Dylan. "But a songwriter doesn't care about what's truthful. What he cares about is what should've happened, what could've happened. That's its own kind of truth. It's like people who read Shakespeare plays, but they never see a Shakespeare play. I think they just use his name."

Dylan's mention of Shakespeare raises a question. The playwright's final work was called *The Tempest*, and some have already asked: Is Dylan's *Tempest* intended as a last work by the now 71-year-old artist? Dylan is dismissive of the suggestion. "Shakespeare's last play was called *The Tempest*. It wasn't called just plain *Tempest*. The name of my record is just plain *Tempest*. It's two different titles." ---Mikal Gilmore, rollingstone.com

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