

# The original music artists and their Music I love II: Bob Dylan

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Figure 1: This The original music artists and their Music I love - II: Bob Dylan

After I introduced The Beatles in the last article, I will introduce Bob Dylan, the great American original singer who was contemporary with The Beatles. Most Chinese people are also relatively unfamiliar with Bob Dylan, and seldom listen to and understand his songs. Here I will introduce some of his original music for readers.

Bob Dylan, formerly known as Robert Zimmerman, was born in 1941 to an American Jewish family. When he came across a poem by the late and popular Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, he made an unusual decision - changing his name to Bob Dylan. Dylan started writing and singing songs at the age of 20, and has written more than 300 songs, and most of the most well-known songs were completed in the 1960s and

1970s. Not only is Dylan hailed as the greatest Songwriter of all time, he is also the first person to win a Nobel Prize for playing music.

## 1 Dylan's most listenable songs

The genres of songs written by Dylan include folk, blues, rock, country music, jazz, gospel music, etc. The content is mainly about criticizing social phenomena, counterculture, civil rights movement, etc. Some of these songs have become a movement to defend civil rights and oppose war. 's hymn. Here I mainly introduce some of Dylan's most worth listening songs.

### 1.1 Like A Rolling Stone

This is one of the most popular songs of all time written and sung by Dylan in 1965. The whole song is 6 minutes long. Dylan's beautiful singing, guitar playing and harmonica accompaniment make the whole melody sound very smooth and pleasant. The song describes Dylan's sneer at a woman who has fallen out of favor and has been left to fend for herself in a hostile and unfamiliar world. Unlike traditional songs, it expresses hatred rather than love, but it also shows sympathy for the woman depicted in "Miss Lonely". As the lyrics state:

“... Once upon a time you dressed so fine  
Threw the bums a dime in your prime, didn't you?  
... Now you don't talk so loud  
Now you don't seem so proud  
About having to be scrounging your next meal...  
... When you ain't got nothing, you got nothing to lose  
You're invisible now, you got no secrets to conceal...  
... How does it feel  
How does it feel  
To be on your own  
With no direction home  
Like a complete unknown  
Like a rolling stone...”

The song revolutionarily combines musical elements such as electric guitar, organ, harmonica, tambourine with Dylan's vocals and Dylan's youthful, cynical sneer, creating a hybrid of blues, impressionism, allegory, and more. It had a huge impact on pop culture and rock music, and also achieved Dylan's superstar status, laying the foundation for Dylan's successful transformation from a folk singer to a rock musician. Rolling Stone listed it at the top of its list of the 500 greatest songs of all time. In 2014, the original handwritten lyrics of the song were auctioned in New York for \$2 million, a record price for a pop music manuscript.

### 1.2 Knockin' On Heaven's Door

The song, written by Dylan for the 1973 revisionist western "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid", became the most popular and covered song Dylan wrote after the 1960s. The lyrics are concise, the refrain "Knock-knock-knockin' on heaven's door" is repeated 17 times throughout the song, and the melody sounds so soft and beautiful, soothing, but also a little sad, as the lyrics say:

“Mama take this badge from me  
I can't use it anymore

It's getting dark too dark to see  
Feels like I'm knockin' on heaven's door  
Knock-knock-knockin' on heaven's door (This sentence is repeated four times) ...  
Mama put my guns in the ground  
I can't shoot them anymore  
That cold black cloud is comin' down  
Feels like I'm knockin' on heaven's door  
Knock-knock-knockin' on heaven's door (This sentence is repeated four times) ...

### 1.3 Blowin' in The Wind

It's a protest song written by Dylan in 1962 that provokes a series of questions about peace, war and freedom. And the refrain in the lyrics "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind; The answer is blowin' in the wind" refers to the incomprehensible ambiguity: either the answer is so obvious, right in your face, Either the answer is as invisible as the wind. The style of the song is ballad, with Dylan's solo and his guitar playing and harmonica accompaniment, the melody is sweet and the lyrics are catchy, and it is considered to be an anthem of the civil rights movement.

### 1.4 Hurricane

This is another protest song written by Dylan in 1976 about the imprisonment of a black boxer, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. The theme of the song is folk rock. It consists of two parts. The song is 8 minutes and 33 seconds long. The melody of the song is sweet and pleasing. It became Dylan's fourth most successful single in the 1970s.

### 1.5 The Times They Are A-Changin'

This is a typical protest song written by Dylan in 1963 and released in 1964 with influences from Irish and Scottish folk. Likewise, the melody performed by Dylan on his solo and his acoustic guitar and harmonica sounds beautiful and natural. The song has influenced people's perception of society since its inception, as the song states:

"... Come gather 'round people  
Wherever you roam...  
Come writers and critics  
Who prophesize with your pen...  
Come senators, congressmen  
Please heed the call...  
Come mothers and fathers  
Throughout the land  
And don't criticize...  
For the times they are a-changin'  
The line it is drawn  
The curse it is cast  
The slow one now

Will later be fast  
As the present now  
Will later be past  
The order is rapidly fadin'  
And the first one now  
Will later be last  
For the times they are a-changin''

Due to the huge influence of this song, it has been covered by many well-known musicians in different genres.

### **1.6 All Along The Watchtower**

The song, written by Dylan while recovering from a motorcycle accident in 1966, depicts a confrontation between a “clown” and a “thief,” who complains about the businessman drinking his wine and eating his Food, but refusing to give him what he deserves, indirectly hints at Dylan’s dissatisfaction with his management and with CBS, which he believes is offering him a cut rate that is far from his status. The genre of the song is folk rock, and the harmonica accompaniment is also interspersed in the middle. The melody of the music is harmonious, beautiful and intriguing. The song has also been covered in various genres by many stars, most notably Jimi Hendrix’s, which was released six months after Dylan’s original recording and became a Top 20 single in 1968.

### **1.7 Mr. Tambourine Man**

A ballad song written by Dylan in 1964 and released in 1965, it has a bright and open melody and is known for its surreal imagery. The figure of Mr. Tambourine in the lyrics is sometimes interpreted as a symbol of Jesus or the Piper of Hamelin. It has also been suggested that the song may also refer to gospel music themes, with Mr. Tambourine referring to the messenger of religious salvation. As described in the refrain of the lyrics:

“Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me  
I’m not sleepy and there is no place I’m going to  
Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man, play a song for me  
In the jingle jangle morning I’ll come following you. . .”

The song went viral after its release, and Dylan liked to perform it at numerous live concerts and included it on his various compilation albums.

### **1.8 Every Grain of Sand**

The song was written by Dylan in 1981 against the backdrop of Dylan became a Christian in 1978. “Every grain of sand” in the lyrics contains strong hints of Jesus, faith and spirituality, as the lyrics state:

“. . . In the fury of the moment, I can see the master’s hand  
In every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand. . .  
I hear the ancient footsteps like the motion of the sea  
Sometimes I turn, there’s someone there, at times it’s only me  
I’m hanging in the balance of a perfect finished plan  
Like every sparrow falling, like every grain of sand”

The melody of the song is soothing and beautiful, while the lyrics are known for their haunting imagery, which some believe can be compared to that of the English poet William Blake.

### 1.9 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall

The song is based on Dylan's 1962 English folk song "Lord Randall". Dylan attributes the song's inspiration to his feelings while reading newspapers in microfilm at the New York Public Library: "After a while, you realize a culture, a culture of feelings, a dark day, a A division, a culture that repays evil for evil, a culture of shared destiny, and humanity has gone off track." Some also consider it one of the most unique protest songs of all time. The rhythm of the song is tight and the melody is beautiful.

### 1.10 Tangled Up in Blue

The song Dylan wrote in 1975 is brilliantly presented with its gushing lyrics and Dylan's flawless vocals. As a result, the song has been widely praised by music critics, especially in the lyrics, and Dylan has performed the song live more than 1,600 times. The lyrics describe a story of love and career, and how "past and present, public and private, distance and friendship and love disintegrates" over time. Billboard considers the song Dylan's most influential and commercial single in a long time. Except for the one-sentence refrain "Tangled up in blue", other lyrics contain up to 83 sentences, which shows Dylan's profound literary and poetic heritage.

### 1.11 Just Like A Woman

Written by Dylan on Thanksgiving 1965, the song features a brisk melody accompanied by carefully selected nylon-string guitar and piano, and is considered the most commercial track on the album. The song is also rumored to describe Dylan's relationship with famous American folk singer Joan Baez, especially in the lyrics:

"... Please don't let on that you knew me when  
I was hungry and it was your world  
Ah, you fake just like a woman  
Yes, you do, you make love just like a woman  
Yes, you do, then you ache just like a woman  
But you break just like a little girl"

It probably refers to the early days of their relationship, since Baez was more famous than Dylan at the time of writing the song. However, the song has been criticized by some for its alleged sexism or misogyny in its lyrics.

### 1.12 Vision of Johanna

It's a song written and sung by Dylan in 1966, and some critics have hailed it as Dylan's crowning achievement in writing, praising the suggestiveness and subtlety of the language. And British Poet Laureate Andrew Motion listed it as the greatest ballad song of all time. Dylan critic Michael Gray praised the song's subtlety: "Its main achievement is to confuse categories, to mix the abstract new philosophy with the figurative in language that is both serious and flippant, delicate and vulgar. describe". Let's take a look at selected parts of the lyrics:

"In the empty lot where the ladies play blindman's bluff with the key chain  
And the all-night girls they whisper of escapades out on the "D" train  
We can hear the night watchman click his flashlight  
Ask himself if it's him or them that's insane

Louise, she's all right, she's just near  
She's delicate and seems like the mirror  
But she just makes it all too concise and too clear  
That Johanna's not here  
The ghost of 'lectricity howls in the bones of her face  
Where these visions of Johanna have now taken my place. . ."

### 1.13 Positively 4th Street

The song, written by Dylan in 1965, is somewhat similar in style to the preceding "Like a rolling stone", with bitter sarcasm lyrics, often thought to be mocking residents of New York's 4th Street for criticizing Dylan From traditional folk style to rock music. Dylan begins by telling the unspecified second-person target in the song that they are very brave to say they are his friends, and then goes on to cite numerous examples of their betrayal. While the lyrics are decidedly negative, the organ-dominated background music is carefree folk rock.

### 1.14 I Shall Be Released

A folk-rock-influenced song written by Dylan in 1968, it was influenced by gospel music, combining images of religious redemption with an implied literal release from prison. Some have described it as a song A song about a redeemed prisoner. The song describes life behind a wall, hearing a man who "swears he's not to blame" and is "shouting that he's framed". And the narrator reflects on "everyone who put me here" and says "any day now I'll be free," as the lyrics describe:

"They say everything can be replaced

They say every distance is not near  
So I remember every face  
Of every man who put me here  
I see my light come shining  
From the west down to the east  
Any day now, any day now  
I shall be released  
They say every man needs protection  
They say that every man must fall  
Yet I swear I see my reflection  
Somewhere so high above this wall. . .  
Now, yonder stands a man in this lonely crowd  
A man who swears he's not to blame  
All day long I hear him shouting so loud  
Just crying out that he was framed."

Some have called the song a description of "a simple, evocative tale of a prisoner's yearning for freedom" and "a rock hymn, part of Dylan's conscious effort to shake off the sprawling imagery of his mid-sixties masterpiece".

### 1.15 It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)

Written by Dylan in 1965, the song contains some of Dylan's most memorable lyrical images, expressing his anger at the hypocrisy, commercialism, consumerism and war mentality of contemporary American culture. And the song goes beyond sociopolitical concerns, expresses existential concerns, and touches on pressing issues of personal experience, as the lyrics describe:

“Darkness at the break of noon  
Shadows even the silver spoon  
The handmade blade, the child's balloon  
Eclipses both the sun and moon  
To understand you know too soon  
There is no sense in trying...  
He not busy being born is busy dying Money doesn't talk, it swears,  
Although the masters make the rules, for the wisemen and the fools  
But even the president of the United States sometimes must have to stand naked”

Dylan says it's one of the most important songs to him, and he often plays it at live concerts. Some also felt that the song might contain more memorable aphorisms than any of Dylan's other songs, making it a grim masterpiece.

### 2 Dylan's achievements

2.1 Among the 100 greatest Songwriters of all time by Rolling Stone magazine, Dylan ranked first;

2.2 Dylan was listed among the 100 most influential people of the 20th century collected by Time magazine;

2.3 Among the 100 greatest artists of all time ranked by Rolling Stone magazine in 2004/2005/2011, Dylan ranked second;

2.4 Dylan was ranked 7th in Rolling Stone's list of the 100 greatest Singers of all time.

2.5 In Rolling Stone's 2010 list of the 500 greatest songs of all time, Dylan contributed 13 songs, ranking third in contribution.

2.6 Winner of the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature “for creating new poetic expressions in the great American song tradition”.

**P.S.** When many people listen to a song, they may just listen to it and don't want to understand what the song expresses. Here I suggest that you understand the meaning and meaning of the lyrics while listening to the song, so that you can really understand the song, and get inspiration from it, especially for the works of original singers. Think about it, if the people on the Nobel Committee only listened to Dylan's songs without appreciating the beauty of the lyrics, would Dylan still win the Nobel Prize?

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