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Sick Of All This Repetition?

by Zac Dadic

Bob Dylan arrived at Tokyo's Narita airport on the evening of March 29, just ahead of the opening night of his 2014 touring year. For his eighth visit to Japan, a total of 17 shows in five cities were scheduled. Like Dylan's previous Japanese tour in 2010, all of the shows were booked in the chain of Zepp live music venues which are located across the country and have an average capacity of around 2,000 persons (mostly standing general admission with some 'business class' seating upstairs).

The first nine shows of the tour were in Tokyo, at the new Zepp Diver City venue which is located on the island of Odaiba, an ever growing slab of reclaimed land situated in Tokyo Bay. Originally, six shows were announced for this venue but due to demand the run of concerts in the capital was then twice extended. The nine shows in Tokyo made it the third highest number of consecutive concerts in the same venue for Bob's entire performing career. Only the gospel era series of concerts performed at San Francisco's Warfield Theater in late 1979 and then again in 1980 featured more consecutive shows in the same venue than this (see accompanying list).

of 2013, where most stops there hosted three-night stands in premiere concert halls. And why wouldn't Bob prefer to spend two weeks in Tokyo during the famed Cherry Blossom season rather than just pass on through? This article provides a detailed review of the first Tokyo show from March 31, with each of the changes and highlights from the following eight shows noted afterwards.



Most consecutive shows at same venue (6 and above)

14 shows	1979 San Francisco
12 shows	1980 San Francisco
9 shows	2014 Tokyo
8 shows	1991 London
7 shows	1978 Los Angeles
7 shows	1992 Los Angeles
7 shows	2010 Tokyo
6 shows	1978 London
6 shows	1981 London
6 shows	1990 London
6 shows	1992 Melbourne
6 shows	1993 London

The big question for attendees before and during these shows was whether Bob would stick with the rigid set-list that featured throughout each of the three tour legs of 2013, or if he would return to the traditional post-1981 fare of mixing up the medicine each night. The simple answer is that things in the land of Bob have not changed. The same set-list as was standard during the Europe 2013 tour was played at five of the Japanese shows (nights two, three, six, eight and nine) with only two different songs added over the other four shows. These were a single performance of *'Blind Willie McTell'* on the opening night and three lovely versions of *'Huck's Tune'*; the first times that this song has been played live. There was also an interesting Bob-moment during the April 8 show when equipment malfunctions forced a mid-set break and saw Bob playing an improvised piano jam (with Charlie and Donny joining in) while the crew tried to figure out what the technical problems were.

Presumably, Bob's management could have booked one or two nights at Tokyo's 10,000 seat Budokan arena and then had the man back on his private jet headed for another joint. So the decision to forgo that quicker and easier revenue and play so many nights in such a small venue was very much appreciated by the enthusiastic and often Dylan-deprived local fans who wanted to see multiple shows. The long residency also meant that visitors such as myself saw this as an opportunity for a Bob-holiday.

So the set-lists were largely the same, Bob's grand piano was still on the right-side of the stage (looking from the crowd), the band remain unchanged from Europe 2013 (i.e. Charlie is still back), the mirrors were still there, the six huge lights hanging across the back curtain remained dimly lit at best, the lighting overall was minimalist and again there was no opening music or spoken intro. As the lights went down at 7pm on March 31, the stage was empty and Stu's now familiar acoustic guitar chord progression cut through the crowd's anticipation. In darkness, Bob's ever-dependable rhythm guitarist walked out from the curtains on the left-side of the stage and continued his noodling as the four other band members moved into their back line formation. Lights flashed across the rear of the stage providing those watching closely with their first vision of Bob as he entered the stage, with another year of touring in front of him.

These small and more acoustically appropriate venues continued what occurred through the European winter tour

The staging details described above gave the first sign that the 2014 tour was most likely to be a continuation of 2013 rather than any new incarnation. Such suspicions became more founded as Stu's guitar intro turned into **'Things Have Changed'**. Maybe Bob is having a quiet laugh each night by repeating this song or maybe he just likes playing it. Whatever the case, it worked and the crowd gave enthusiastic cheers throughout. Bob delivered the song from the centre-stage microphone, his vocals strong, controlled and clear. He looked in great shape – fit, youthful, relaxed and ten-times healthier than should be humanly possible for a man who has lived as many lives as he. Sporting a black suit with intricate white embroidered patterns on the sleeves, coat pockets and pant legs, Bob went without a hat on this opening night.



Musically, **'Things Have Changed'** was the same as its 2012 and 2013 incarnation, an up-tempo acoustic country shuffle. The band all looked happy and relaxed as the first song of the year met its final enthusiastic applause. Next up was **'She Belongs To Me'**, again in the same form as late last year. Bob held his notes at the end of each line creating a pretty pattern and demonstrating that his voice was in better shape than it has been for the majority of the past decade. It's a hushed and controlled vocal style now that made the most of his remaining range. The band's backing too was beautifully gentle, giving Bob plenty of space.

'Beyond Here Lies Nothin' saw Bob move to the piano with his choppy chords providing a response to his vocal call. The song, which was as good as could be hoped for, is really the only weak link in the first set. **'What Good Am I?'** saw Bob back centre-stage, crooning out this gem in a soft and sparse manner. Just like the previous tour, it sounded gorgeous and was delivered with great care by all. Song five brought the first change with Donny's banjo easing into **'Blind Willie McTell'**. It was delivered in a slow 2/4 polka-style time signature and Bob again really gave a great vocal performance with extended harmonica playing after the last verse.



'Duquesne Whistle' then swung with George on brushes and Bob back at the piano. The crowd gave the first **"Tempest"** number a good cheer. Fans around the world may have dubbed these Japanese shows the "2014 Cherry Blossom Tour!" but the locals were wanting this to be the "Tempest Tour". Bob's latest album is very popular in Japan and the fans, in particular the younger ones, love the new stuff. In the context of this set, **'Duquesne Whistle'** is the new **'Summer Days'** with its laid-back rockabilly style. Mid-way through, the song cut loose with a tempo-burst and some solos from Charlie. This excited the crowd further and the band

exchanged flashed smiles, as they got their first chance to show some flair.

'Pay In Blood' was menacing with Bob stern-faced centre-stage. At the end of each verse, the musical refrain saw him give a nodding survey of the crowd with his left hand propped on his hip, thumb hooked in pocket, and his right hand holding the microphone out. This new Bob dance move became much imitated and laughed about by fans after the shows.

'Tangled Up In Blue' was kicked off by Stu on acoustic but Bob missed the first line. He picked up with "...and he was laying in bed", a rare lyric flub for the night. By the end of the first verse the crowd were totally on side however, and the vocals became nicely expressive. **'Tangled'** remains in its abridged four verse form with the third, fourth and sixth verses skipped. The original verses five and seven are still slotted in to three and four but featured many new lines. It is the song that Bob has never stopped writing and rewriting after all. The addition of, "Memorise these lines and remember these rhymes," stood out as being a possible nod to where Bob is at now with his repeated set-lists. (These new **'Tangled'** lyrics are transcribed at the end of this article).

The guttural chug of opening guitar chords to **'Love Sick'** created a simmering excitement through the crowd. With each Tokyo show the song just got better and better and became the highlight of the first set. **'Love Sick'** was the only song to feature three electric guitars with Stu, Charlie and Donny all chiming in. It was a fantastic performance and this song played this well at anytime over the past decade would have been hailed as the highlight of that night by many. But in this current show it's one of many staking a claim for that title (after **'Long And Wasted Years'**, but more of that later).

As **'Love Sick'** crashed to its close, Bob said, "thank you, we're gonna get off the stage for about 15 minutes, but we'll be right back, don't go away," before walking off into the darkness. The intermission announcements at this point each night were the only words he would speak and many in the crowd, who didn't understand English, let alone Bob's peculiar garbled dialect of it, initially had no idea of what he said or what was going on. As the house lights came up, the overwhelming majority of attendees remained fixed in their places, silently waiting for the show to resume. On most nights the break was around 25 minutes and the Japanese audiences were ever-patient and graciously accepting of whatever Bob was doing backstage.

When the intermission was re-introduced at the start of 2013 (after being a feature of the 1966 and 1978 world tours) it was speculated by some that it was so that Bob could enjoy a smoke and get his nicotine levels back in balance mid-show. But the rumour heard at these shows was that Bob was on an oxygen mask backstage, a common trade trick for professional singers. If true, this O2 jolt may help explain the renewed strength of Bob's vocals throughout each night's performance.

The second set opened much like the first with Stu's electric guitar bluntly signalling that the next half was underway. Again this intro came from off-stage without warning with Stu then walking into place and the band then Bob following. **'High Water'** commenced with Donny on banjo and Bob in the middle. The songs played in the second set on the first night in Tokyo were a repeat of the standard played across the previous European tour – all were of a high standard with **'Simple Twist Of Fate'** getting a great reaction. After the blues stomp rave-up of **'Early Roman Kings'** there were four

soft and slow songs. *'Forgetful Heart'* was delivered as tender and mournfully as it has been since its live debut in late 2009. Both *'Spirit On The Water'* and *'Soon After Midnight'* were played as old-time dance hall numbers, with Bob singing in a lullaby style. *'Scarlet Town'* was much darker with Donny again on banjo, Stu on acoustic and Bob back at the front crooning this tale.



The second set was mostly low-energy musically, focusing on Bob's old-man musical side. But in reality it was all a clever set-up, lulling the audience one way before Bob hit them from all directions with the set-closing *'Long And Wasted Years'*. There was a reason that we'd been taken down this mellow road- to provide maximum impact when the long descent of the *'Long And Wasted Years'* intro struck like slow-motion lightning. Bob stood centre-stage delivering lines and phrasing with more passion and venom than had been witnessed for years (maybe decades). On the first night, he inhabited the character of the song, a man seemingly full of regret looking back on relationships that had long ago ended badly.

In 2004, as part of Bob's interview with the American "60 Minutes" programme, he spoke of the contrast between his songs and performance style to that of pop songs. He said, "Have you ever seen Mick Jagger do *'Satisfaction'*? He acts it out... I can't do that." Ten years later and Bob was sure acting something out when he sang *'Long And Wasted Years'*. There were gestures a-plenty as one stinging line was thrown down after another. Had this old dog learned a new trick or was it not an act at all? From the tone of the performance, Bob seemed to be revealing an emotional rawness, as if it were a window to the fragments of his broken marriages. Whatever the case, the audience went nuts from the opening note and cheered Bob all the way through. This reaction was the same each night, part thrill of hearing a favourite song from *"Tempest"* and part pure response to witnessing a performance of this devastating intensity.

It must be the ultimate satisfaction for an established artist to have their latest work receiving the greatest audience response each night. When was the last time that the Stones could claim this feat from their own seemingly never ending touring- 1972? In post-show discussions, some fans compared their experiences of seeing the Rolling Stones live in Tokyo a few weeks beforehand (they played three shows at the massive indoor baseball stadium, the Tokyo Dome in March) and also Paul McCartney who performed across Japan late last year. The difference they noted was that the Stones and McCartney played their old hits while Bob was playing his new stuff. In many places, fans may naturally be disappointed in not hearing an expected nostalgia trip, but not in Japan. Many of Bob's Japanese fans were thrilled to hear the six *"Tempest"* tunes that were delivered each night.

After *'Long And Wasted Years'*, Bob and band left the stage briefly to rapturous response. They were soon back to deliver the now standard encore duo of *'Watchtower'* and *'Blowin' In The Wind'*. Each was a nice solid version keeping with how they have been performed over recent years and much appreciated by the audience. At the end Bob stood and gave his stare-down of the crowd before leaving. The first show of the year was done and like the Sumida River, Bob just keeps rolling on.

March 31 marked the end of Japan's 2013-14 financial year, a significant date in this business-oriented country. Bank queues across Tokyo were long with the population reconciling their finances and ensuring all was in order for the new term ahead. For Bob, his opening show of the year which coincided with this, was business as usual but when business is this good, why change.

April 1 was another significant day in Japan. This year it saw the country's sales tax increase from 5% to 8%, a measure that many were talking about, with much concern being felt about the likely impact on daily costs of living. The debt-ridden government desperately needs this additional revenue to try to keep up with providing health care for the country's significantly ageing population. The first day of the financial year is also when Japan's major companies take on their new recruits for the year. It's a sign of the health of the country how many young people will start their new careers on this day and in recent years many companies had not been hiring. This year though saw a rebound and during the day the clean-cut freshmen and women could be seen walking through the city in their identical black suits and brief cases. It is standard corporate culture in Japan that these new recruits must all dress and behave identically to each other for the first few years of their employment apprenticeship as part of the conditioning for their careers ahead. In Japan, this is part of the philosophy that any nail that is raised quickly gets hammered down.



Sameness, repetition, matching work uniforms and no employees allowed to stand out from the others. Sound familiar? Anyone heard from Duke lately? For Bob, his second Tokyo show largely continued the pattern of the opening night. The only set change being the dropping of *'Blind Willie'* for the reintroduction of *'Waiting For You'*. The song kept its gentle Texas waltz style and perfectly suited the current restrained and sparse sound that Bob has his band stationed at. The keyboard warriors at home who complain and question why Bob has pulled this obscurity out of his hat are missing something. Sure it's not *'Visions Of Johanna'* but it's also not *'Honest With Me'*, *'Tweedle Dee'*, *'Thunder On The Mountain'* or *'Jolene'*.

Again, *'Long And Wasted Years'* was the highlight of this show with Bob singing several lines to six excited ladies in the front

row on his right side. Most theatrically, he delivered the, "It's the same for you as it is for me" line on bended knee directly to Itsuko Nishimura in this group of fans. Ms Nishimura from Osaka, operates Japan's top Bob fan-website ("How To Follow Bob Dylan") and is a highly respected member of the local Bob community.

The following night, (April 2) was a night off and Charlie Sexton appeared as a guest for the encore at Gov't Mule's show at the 250-seat Billboard Live venue in Roppongi. Tony was also in attendance but did not play.

The third show (April 3) saw a repeat of the second night's set-list and overall it was another solid performance from everyone. It can't be easy for musicians to play in such a restrained style when the natural musical inclination would be to do the opposite. But Bob's current band members have racked up a combined 58 touring years on the road behind him and they know how to deliver what the boss wants. It must make it easier too when each show now is essentially a rehearsal for the next.



On Friday night, (April 4) with ten minutes to go before the scheduled start time, it appeared that a change was in the wind. Four roadies moved across the stage replacing each of the set-lists and taping down an extra page on top of Bob's piano. They each then scribbled something on those printed pages. This activity provided an added sense of excitement but the show started and then continued on as before. With the first three songs sticking to the script, confusion among those hoping for something new increased. *'What Good Am I?'* was skipped and the set moved straight into *'Waiting For You'* and *'Duquesne Whistle'*. Some unfamiliar piano notes were then tinkled and the band took things somewhere fresh. It was the debut live performance of *'Huck's Tune'*, with Bob singing the first few verses from the piano before moving to centre-stage to close it out. It was a delicate and slightly nervous delivery but this just added to the drama of the moment with everyone willing Bob and the band to make it through the song in one piece. There was a sense of relief and great appreciation as it drew to a close, with those who recognised the number amazed at what had just happened. Bob's singing was top shelf, full of care and control and the band provided perfect backing.

Saturday's show (April 5) was a pseudo-matinee with doors opening at 4pm and the concert then starting at five. *'What Good Am I?'* returned in the first set but then *'Forgetful Heart'* was passed over in the second for a repeat of *'Huck's Tune'*. This version saw Bob centre stage for the first few verses before walking to the piano for its close. It was a much more confident and polished performance than the previous night but each were just as good, possessing their own subtle charms. There's no point trying to say which version was better but many more in the crowd knew the song on this night and it received a bigger cheer.

'Huck's Tune''s lyrical refrain of "I'm gonna have to put you down for a while," was the subject of much discussion among the more discerning Japanese fans after each performance. With literal meanings having such prominence in their culture, there was a desire to understand what it actually meant. Further complicating matters is that the Japanese translation of the *'Huck's Tune'* lyrics that were included in the local release of *'Tell Tale Signs'* gave the line the much nastier and conclusive reading of, "It's over, I never want to see you again." The subtlety and abstraction of the real lyric being totally lost here and at odds with the tender delivery of the live performances.

Bob appeared really happy with the band's performance on this fifth night and gave Charlie an affectionate punch on the shoulder as they walked off after *'Long And Wasted Years'*. At the end of *'Blowin' In The Wind'* he gave Tony a smile and spoke a few words to him. A guess at what may have been said was, "Good show tonight boys."

The sixth show started with a simple three-note chime played over the PA, signalling 'show-time' just seconds prior to Stu's standard guitar intro. Sometimes even the smallest change seems noteworthy. Whilst Bob had been received warmly and positively each and every night, the general atmosphere on the first night was comparatively quiet to what was reached by this stage of the run. Possibly in response to this growing audience encouragement, *'Duquesne Whistle'* saw Charlie venture closer in to Bob's piano mid-song and give him a hopeful look, as if to say, "come on Bob, let's really take this song somewhere else tonight." With a nod received in reply, Bob then plonked his keys with some minor variation to give Charlie the okay to follow him with a little improvised riffing. Again, these little differences each night stood out with Charlie in particular always playing different fills and solos on his occasional outings. (The commencement of the second set on April 7 also began with a new three-note intro spot which would remain for each of the subsequent Tokyo shows.)

At the very end of this sixth show, Bob surprised everyone by leaning down to the people in the front row and signing some items that they were holding out to him. These included a Rolling Stone magazine with Bob on the front cover. The mini-signing session went on for about a minute with the crowd amazed and the recipient fans mobbed afterwards with congratulations. When the house lights came up, Stravinsky's *'Rights Of Spring'* was played over the PA, the first time at these shows that there had been any such 'outré' music. (This classical piece, full of drama, was then played again after the remaining three shows.)

The seventh concert (April 8) will no doubt be forever referred to among obsessive fans as the "instrumental piano jam" show. Things started as per usual but towards the end of *'Beyond Here Lies Nothin'*, a squealing feedback noise grew, forcing the song to peter out. Tony quickly walked off stage, a sign that there was something wrong. George covered his ears, wincing in apparent pain. No one seemed to know what was going on as power to some instruments was lost and feedback squawked intermittently. Among the mixed-up confusion, Bob then started banging out some piano chords, repeating a section from the song just finished and intimidating to Charlie to add some guitar lines over the top. The next four minutes saw Bob, Charlie and Donny improvising a slow piano based instrumental with the crowd providing plenty of encouragement for this unexpected 'new song'. With the situation going nowhere fast, Bob stopped and walked off without a word, but not in anyway looking bothered by the ongoing technical problems.

For the next 25 minutes all manner of attempts were made by roadies to sort out the situation. During this delay Stu walked across the stage several times touching and tapping instruments to much applause. He even sat at the drums and theatrically tinged a cymbal. George had a turn walking out too, inspecting a guitar amp. Then to everyone's delight, Tony lead Bob out on a wander across the stage. Bob comically approached a white guitar that had lain untouched in front of the drums each night and motioned as if would pick it up but then didn't and ambled slowly back off stage. Audience members called out 'play acoustic Bob', "Everything is broken" and "Ghosts of electricity", joining in with the fun. With everyone off stage, two announcements were then made in Japanese stating that the stage monitors had blown and that they were being fixed.

Eventually the band returned from the shadows and eased into a soft and slow reading of *'Huck's Tune'*, again with a different texture from the previous two versions. The train was then back on track and the remainder of the standard set-list played (*'What Good Am I?'* dropped for *'Huck's'*). At the end of another fantastic *'Love Sick'*, Bob said, "Arigato! We're been having a bit of trouble up here tonight, so thanks for bearing with us and we'll be right back." After the earlier break, a shortened intermission was taken. The show ended as usual with no further mention made of the technical problems. (Bob's use of the word "Arigato" got a big cheer and he would repeat this at the two following shows.)

The final two nights saw the standard set-list repeated and the same very high level of performance delivered. A minor variation on the eighth night was a long harmonica solo played at the start of *'Tangled'*, before the first verse was sung. Bob appeared happy and engaged during both of these last two nights and graciously accepted a bunch of flowers from a fan in the front row at the end of the eighth show. For each night, the crowd's appreciation continued to grow in spite of the sameness of the set-lists. During the seven shows that Bob played in Tokyo back in March 2010 (at the nearby Zepp Tokyo venue), a total of 58 different songs was played. Each concert of that previous visit saw surprises and lots of fun, but the standard of Bob's singing, attention to lyrics and phrasing was nowhere near the level of these 2014 shows. Whereas the 2010 concerts were like a party, Bob has now taken on a serious and very business-like approach. He looks to be deep in concentration throughout, seemingly determined to give as good a performance as he possibly can with what he has left.

His singing was strong and pronounced every night and the band is finally playing in a restrained style that fits with these vocals. The choice of songs for this tour (and last year) seems to have been very deliberately selected to suit Bob's current vocal style. The pacing of each set too has obviously been constructed with a lot of fore-thought. Further, the sound quality in the venue each night was significantly better than of any of the Bob shows that I have experienced since my journey began in 1986. Standing in the centre of the floor each night, Bob's vocals were prominent and clear in the PA mix, with each member of the band audible and separated underneath this. After many long and wasted years of declining performance standards (2006-2012), Bob is now back on top of his game. The problem for some though, is that it is largely the same game each night. For the fans, the thrill and expectation of the unknown when attending a Bob show has been lost for the guarantee of a high quality performance. This is great news for casual fans who want to see one show and take that memory home, but a challenge for the obsessives who want to see multiple shows and crave for different songs and experiences each time.

It is a given that whatever Bob does pisses people off, with the most affront generally being taken by those proclaiming to be his biggest fans. This has been the story since 1962 and sees no sign of changing. With hindsight, the majority of Bob controversies that have divided and angered his fans at each turn clearly come down in Bob's favour, and those who complained at the time sooner or later come off as the ones who backed a horse that ran the wrong way. Even the 1980's output is now getting a rightful reappraisal thanks to the recent *"Bob Dylan In The '80s"* tribute release. And before that, the *"Another Self Portrait"* box set gave new appreciation to the most maligned Bob album. How will those who are complaining about the static set-lists now appear after there has been time to look back and reappraise this current Dylan live phase?

Maybe the negative online reaction from some fans to this new state of Bob affairs can be attributed to those who haven't actually attended the shows and experienced first-hand the strength of what Bob is delivering live. The set-lists on the 1966 and 1979-80 tours were after all largely static, saw much hostile audience reaction at the time, yet are now regarded as the high points in Bob's live performance and singing career. At the wrap party to mark the end of the 1975 Rolling Thunder Review tour, Larry 'Ratso' Sloman upset Bob bitterly by telling him that he hadn't played his best songs on that tour. Bob may have rested his 'best' songs in 1975 to focus on the then new, but is there any Dylan fan who doesn't wish to have had the chance to see a Rolling Thunder show? When attending these 2014 shows, what appears to be paramount for Bob now is the quality of the performance that he gives rather than just playing disposable versions of songs that on paper may produce more excitement than those currently on offer.



The big unanswered question is what has motivated this change in Bob's performance style since the start of 2013? Did he take note of how Leonard Cohen structures his concerts and say, 'I could do that'? Or has the financial success of his parallel painting career caused a rethink to his musical approach? As a painter, Bob can produce one picture and then sell hundreds, even thousands of 'limited edition' prints of it. The following year, reprints are then issued of his most popular pieces offering variations of colours, shadings and the choice of three sizes. But essentially it's the same piece, with all of that revenue coming from one canvas. Despite Bob's painting style being a lot like his piano playing—unsophisticated yet endearing, lots of people are paying big money for these works and saying nice things. Each song of these current live shows seems like it has a remarkably similar artistic philosophy to his selling of painting reprints. He works up a very nice version of a particular song with the band and then consciously delivers it in a similar fashion every night, with maybe only some minor vocal nuances and musical colour and shading variations added to the mix.

While Bob was in Tokyo, the Andy Warhol exhibition, "15 Minutes Eternal" was on show at the Mori Art Museum, not far from the hotel that Bob stayed in. Included in the final room of this was a looped film of the screen test that Dylan did for Warhol in 1966. It's common knowledge that Bob dismissed Warhol and his style of mass-produced art, but looking at the number of Marilyn screen prints on display at the Tokyo exhibit, each with its own colour differences, it was striking how this style of repetitious mass-production art was similar to what Bob was doing on stage each night. Many may dislike Warhol and how he revolutionised the business aspect of modern art but as "15 Minutes Eternal" showed, what he created and achieved has endured.

Those who are complaining about Bob's latest revolutionary move of playing the same show each night similarly seem to be missing the point. Bob is not playing for those at home who obsess about varying set-lists. He's most likely also not playing for the fans who follow him from town to town or come along to every show in the same city. It does seem clear though, that he is playing the best show that he can for those two thousand-odd people who are there with him in the same room on that particular night. Many of the songs that are now locked-in tight on the set-list may not be from the same league as his 'best' songs, but his performances of these numbers are the best that Bob has given in years. As fans, we now have this information and how we choose to use it is up to us. As the man used to tell us every night, "Pay for your ticket and don't complain".

During '*Pay In Blood*' at the final Tokyo show on April 10, a group of fans down the front all started screaming out an excited, "Yeah!" and throwing their hands up at the end of each line that Bob spat out. This pattern grew, creating a spontaneous call and response effect that had not happened at any of the previous shows. It sounded fantastic and Bob responded by letting go of his grip on the microphone stand and performing directly for those enthusiastic fans already enjoying the song so much. The more animated theatrical delivery that followed as Bob strutted and pulled poses was both stunning and fun to watch. The band members saw it too and grinned in delight. By the song's end, the version had differentiated itself from the previous eight and was one of the highlights of all of these shows.

Returning for the final encore in Tokyo, '*All Along The Watchtower*' was received with much enthusiasm. Over the course of these nine shows, some subtle differences evolved in certain songs. For '*Watchtower*', the breakdown quietened section after the third verse became more extended and teased out. The longer this went on, the better it got before the contrast switch back into the rock progression ended the song. The final '*Blowin' In The Wind*' also received an

extended ending with Bob giving a long harmonica solo to close out the show. The house lights, which came on soon after Bob and the band had left the stage, made it clear that there would be no extra song on this final night. Again, there was no paean to sentimentality from our Bob when it would have been so easy to do so. Instead he just said what he wanted to say with the songs that he chose to play and left it up to the audience to take from that whatever they wanted. The Japanese fans lapped it up, ever gracious and appreciative for the blessings received each night.

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She lit a burner on the stove
and then she swept away the dust
You look like someone that I used to know she said
You look like somebody that I used to trust
Then she opened up a book of poems
And she said to me just so you know
Memorise these lines and remember these rhymes
When you're out there walking to and fro
And every one of them words rang true
And glowed like burning coal
Pouring off of every page
Like it was written in my soul from me to you
Tangled up in blue

And I'm going on back again
I got to get to them somehow
Yesterday is dead and gone
And tomorrow might as well be now
Some of 'em, went on the mountain
And some 'em went down on the ground
Some of their names are written in flames
And some of 'em, well they just left town
Me I'm still on the road I'm tryin' to stay out of the joint
We always felt the same
Depending on the point of view
Tangled up in Blue

Zepp Diver City
TOKYO