

# Gems tucked among technical speak and analysis

## books



**A Simple Twist of Fate: Bob Dylan and the Making of 'Blood on the Tracks'**  
Andy Gill and Kevin Odegard  
Da Capo Press  
\$54.95

Bob Dylan is the greatest living figure in rock music and is the most written about artist to have walked the planet.

Yet for all the books, interviews and feature articles devoted to Dylan's five-decade body of work, the story behind the making of his classic 1975 comeback album *Blood on the Tracks* has never been fully told.

*A Simple Twist of Fate* is an attempt by Andy Gill and Kevin Odegard to correct this major oversight.

The credentials of the pair cannot be called into question – Gill is the author of Dylan biography *Don't Think Twice, It's Alright* while Odegard played guitar on the released version of *Blood* —

and, for the most part, they have succeeded in their quest.

But the book's narrative flow is interrupted by highly detailed descriptions of songs and studio techniques, giving *Simple Twist* an irritating stop-start feel.

Terms bandied about in relation to songs — "acuity", "macro-cosmic", "desultoriness", "solipsism" — are likely to have most readers reaching for the dictionary, while those never to have set foot in a studio will also struggle at times.

Here's a sample of what producer Phil Ramone has to say about the recording process:

"One (microphone) was a Sony C37, a tube mike; the other was a Neumann KM56. I think I tried

something different on the vocals, because I went to a dynamic mike, a Sennheiser 421, rather than a condenser mike."

Er, quite. This is not to say the book contains no anecdotal gems; just that one has to look hard among the jumble of technical speak and song analysis to find them.

The best is the tale of how *Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts* came to be.

A harmonica in the right key could not be found so the heavily pregnant wife of guitarist Chris Weber was sent to fetch one.

While she was gone, Dylan fiddled around with an off-key harmonica and he and the band did a take of the song.

This version ended up on the album, complete with out-of-tune instrument.

Such first-hand accounts are *Simple Twist's* most admirable attribute.

We are told the story by the people who matter and were there at the time. A couple of previously unpublished illustrations of the sessions, sketched by drummer Bill Berg, add to the book's eyewitness nature.

Both avid Dylanologists and casual followers of the great man's career should enjoy the new-ground *A Simple Twist of Fate* has to offer — if they can avoid being tangled up in the technical blues, that is.

— Daniel Markham

# An insight into creativity behind the lens

## exhibitions

JANE USSHER  
portraits of our time

Jane Ussher: *Portraits of our Time*  
Auckland Museum until Sep 5

If you believe that a picture paints a thousand words, then Jane Ussher's photographic exhibition at the Auckland War Museum, *Portraits of Our Time* is surely worth a million more.

Spanning more than 20 years, Ussher has arguably captured the personalities from one of the most tumultuous times in New Zealand's history.

Starting with the free love of the Sweetwaters festival in 1981, Ussher has moved effortlessly between 40 of New Zealand's most influential figures in the past 20 years, with politicians and political activists, musicians,

actors, sports heroes and businessmen all falling under the masterful gaze of her Hasselblad camera.

Switching between colour and black and white, Ussher has provided her subjects with a voice of their own, from former Prime Minister Sir Robert Muldoon leering into the lens through to Tuhoi activist Tame Iti, defiantly posing before the camera.

The pictures are not contrived, yet they are provocative.

Ussher's ability to precisely capture the mood of her subjects is exquisite. From the eminently aged activist Erich Geiringer, to

actor Kevin Smith's thoughtful muse, she conveys the sense that her subjects are unaware they have been photographed.

Published to coincide with the release of her book, *Jane Ussher Portraits*, a collection of 90 colour and black and white images — of which 40 were chosen for the exhibition — and the 65th anniversary of the *Listener*, Ussher's photographs give the viewer an insight into the creativity behind the lens.

There is a richness and texture in every image, however Ussher has ensured that every portrait is central, while enabling the

peripheral images, background setting and colour to emerge through to the viewer's gaze to compliment her art.

*Portraits of Our Time* illustrates Ussher's love of the human form; actor Bruno Lawrence's thoughtful, cherubic gaze into the heavens is just one example of her rich talent for capturing the mood of her subjects.

Dunedin-born, Ussher now lives in Auckland with her husband and son, having forged and honed her craft over 25 years and currently works as a *Listener* staff photographer.

— Barnaby Sharp

# ART, FILM, MUSIC, THEATRE, SHOWS

## MUSIC

### Monday August 23

**New Zealand String Quartet with Hariolf Schlichtig.** Experience the intimacy of live chamber music. Performing Mozart's two late works, K515 and K614, and Brahms' Opus 111. Auckland Town Hall, 8pm, \$45-\$55, student rush \$10 on the night from 7pm (with ID).

### Tuesday August 24

**Open Mic.** Singer/songwriters perform. All Nations Tavern, 8pm.

### Wednesday August 25

**Brazuka.** Authentic Brazilian music. Mexican Café.

**Friivolous.** Hip hop with members of Verse II, Che Fu's Krates and Open Souls. Khuja Lounge, 10pm, free.

**The Battle of the Bands.** Second Semi Final. The Kings Arms, 7.30pm, \$7.

### Thursday August 26

**Thursday Live.** Variety of funk bands delivering super-fast funk and soul with Brazilian and afro beats. Khuja Lounge, 10pm, \$5.

**Jerome Hendrix.** Powerful soul and jazz. Grand Central, 9.30pm, free.

**Auckland Philharmonia Vero Premier Series.** Featuring the first performance of a new piano concerto by New Zealand com-

poser Kenneth Young. Conducted by Steven Smith. The concert will also include Kodály's Dances of Galánta and Brahms' Symphony No. 2. Auckland Town Hall, 8pm, Adult \$20-\$98, conc. \$10-\$8.

### Friday August 27

**Fang Album Release (and guests).** Indie rock group. Sparse rhythms, haunting keyboards, dark violins and angular guitars. The Kings Arms.

**Tim Beverage and the Auckland Philharmonia.** A night of sophisticated swinging big-band music. Beverage sings standards from the 1940s - 1960s in Russ Garcia's Hollywood-style arrangements. Bruce Mason Centre, 8pm, \$16 - \$66.

**Kim Paterson Quartet:** Jazz. The London Bar, free.

### Saturday August 28

**Auckland Underground Festival 2004.** Punk rock from Dunno, Tempo 38, Now Quite Right. The Eden's Bar, 8pm, \$5.

**Surrealistic (and guests).** Electric and acoustic instruments of all descriptions with Irish whistle. The Dog's Bollix.

**New Sound Saturdays.** Rhythm and blues disco classics hosted by Ned Roy. Safari Lounge.

### Sunday August 29

**Caitlin Smith trio.** Live jazz. Opus NZ Bar and Brasserie, 5pm.

**Ray Bishop and Carl.** Songs with jazz theme. Iguacu, 7pm.

**Shadowdance.** ChinYeh and Alisa Willis play flute music by Feld, Gryc, Elmsly, and Widor on piano. Music Theatre, Auckland University School of Music, 6 Symonds St, 5pm, \$24/conc. Ph: 300 3700.

## THEATRE

*Whale Rider* enjoyed award-win-

### Whale Rider - The Musical

ning success at the movies and now it's hitting the stage. Directed by Toby Gough, the stage production will be different to the film version, sticking more closely to the original book.

The stage version will tell the full story, including that of the whale. Mr Gough says the music will not be what people would expect, but will include music from the Pacific and New Zealand — old chants mixed with new beats.

It's not a traditional cultural show, and is designed with children in mind.

**Aug 20 - Sept 5: Tues-Sat 7.30pm, Sun 5pm, Wed 1pm, Sat 28 and Sat 04 2pm.** Civic Theatre, cnr Queen and Wellesley Sts, City. \$42-\$55. Ph: 307 5000.

### An Inspector Calls

This thriller, set before WWI, is one of Britain's most popular plays. It has won 19 major theatre awards in London and New York. The Birling

family, living in Edwardian times in the industrial English Midlands, gather to celebrate the engagement of daughter Shelia to Gerald Croft, the son of a rival business family. But their lives are shattered when Inspector Goole arrives to investigate the death of a young woman. Written by J.B. Priestley.

**Aug 28 - 11 Sept:** Rose Centre, School Rd, Belmont, North Shore, Adult \$18 / Conc. \$15. Ph: 445 2386.

### Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Edward Albee's famous black comedy exposes the relationship between George, a disillusioned academic, and Martha his bitter wife. An evening of fun descends into an emotional nightmare and psychological warfare when George and Martha invite Nick, the new biology instructor, and his wife, Honey, back for a night cap. As the tag-line for the 1966 film version says "Drop in for Drinks and Brace yourself".

**Aug 19 - Sep 18:** Maidment Theatre, 8 Alfred St, City. Adult \$47, Student \$30. Ph: 308 2383.

## EXPOS

### The Women's Show - Lifestyle Expo.

Including entry to The Contemporary Art Expozay and the

Home and Small Business Expo. Everything for the modern woman is on show — including food, marriage, fitness, and pampering.

**Aug 27- 29:** Auckland Showgrounds, 217 Greenlane Rd, Epsom, 9.30am - 5pm, Women \$15, men dragged along for free! info:www.lifestyleexpos.com.

## VENUES

**All Nations Tavern:** Pompallier Tce, Ponsonby.

**Bruce Mason Centre:** Cnr Hurstmere Rd and Promande, Takapuna.

**Grand Central:** 126 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby.

**Iguacu:** 269 Parnell Rd, Parnell.

**Khuja Lounge:** 536 Queen St.

**Mexican Café:** 67 Victoria St West, City.

**Opus:** 43 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby.

**Safari Lounge:** 116 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby.

**The Dog's Bollix:** 582 K'Rd, City.

**The Eden's Bar:** K'Rd, City.

**The Kings Arms:** 59 France St, Newton.

**The London Bar:** Cnr Queen and Wellesley Sts, City.

Listings compiled by:  
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If you think something is missing from our list, email us at: wahanui@aut.ac.nz