

# **HARD TIMES IN THE CITY**

## **BOB DYLAN 1961**

by

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**A SUMMARY OF RECORDING & CONCERT ACTIVITIES,  
RELEASES, TAPES & BOOKS.**



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

First professional year as a musician starts with Dylan hitchhiking into New York in January without a home and ends with his triumphant return home to Hibbing with a Columbia recording contract and the first LP recorded.

## 2 CALENDAR

- 24 January Dylan arrives in New York accompanied by his friend Fred Underhill, heads for "Cafe Wha?" where he performs a couple of songs, after which the compere asks the audience for a plays to stay for "Bob and Fred" that night.
- 25 January Dylan visits Guthrie's family in Howard's Beach. Meets young Arlo and teaches him some harmonica.
- 29 January Dylan performs at Izzy Young's Folklore Centre. Meets Woody Guthrie at the home of Sid and Bob Gleason in East Orange, New Jersey
- February A second (or third) "home-tape" is recorded by Sid and Bob Gleason, while Dylan is singing to their daughter Kathy.
- February Dylan starts to accompany folk singers like Fred Neil, Mark Spoelstra, Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Dave van Ronk on harmonica. He is also performing at "Cafe Wha?", "The Gaslight", "The Limelight", "The Lion's Head" and "Mill's Tavern".
- 13 February Dylan starts performing regularly at Gerde's Folk City on the Monday night hootenanny.
- 14 February In February The Gleasons are given a dated handwritten copy of a new Dylan composition called *Song To Woody*.
- 27 March Mike Porco, the owner of Gerde's Folk City, offers Dylan to be support act to John Lee Hooker for a fortnight in April.
- 5 April First paid concert at the Loeb Music Center for the University of New York Folk Society. In the audience is a young Suze Rotolo.
- 11-25 April Dylan plays a five song set as support to John Lee Hooker at Gerde's Folk City.
- May Dylan tries to get a recording contract first with Folkways records, then with with Elektra and Vanguard. None of them are interested.
- May The writing of the second recorded composition, *Talkin' New York*.
- 6 May At the Indian Neck Folk Festival in Branford, Connecticut, Dylan performs three songs and meets Bob Neuwirth for the first time.
- Mid May Dylan returns to Minneapolis and a number of home recordings are made.
- June A hand-written manuscript shows that Dylan wrote a song called *East Colorado Blues*. No known recording exists.
- 7 & 8 July Dylan appears at Caffe Lena, Saratoga Springs, New York.

- 29 July Dylan is part of a 12-hour radio broadcast from Riverside Church, Manhattan, NYC, a "Hootenanny Special".
- 6 September Dylan's set on Gerde's Folk City is recorded.
- 26 September New York Times reporter Robert Shelton attends the opening night of another two-week Dylan residency at Gerde's Folk City. Dylan is supporting The Greenbriar Boys and plays two sets each night. After his first set Shelton interviews Dylan and then writes an enthusiastic review concentrating on Dylan.
- 30 September First studio recording takes place when Dylan joins a Carolyn Hester session. He plays harmonica on three songs later released on Hester's debut album. Producer is John Hammond.
- 20 October Izzy Young conducts a written interview with Dylan. In this he mentions his own composition *California Brown Eyed Baby* that he is performing at the time.
- 23 October Izzy Young conducts another written interview with Dylan.
- 26 October Dylan signs for Columbia Records.
- 29 October Dylan appears on Oscar Brand's radio show "Folksong Festival".
- 4 November Izzy Young books Dylan at the Carnegie Recital Hall. Only 53 people attend.
- 20 November Recording of first album, **Bob Dylan**.
- 23 November Thanksgiving Day is spent with Suze Rotolo at the home of Eve and Mac McKenzie. After the dinner Dylan plays a number of songs that are recorded by the hosts.
- 22 December On his way home to Hibbing for Christmas celebrations, he gives a private performance, this time in Minneapolis at the house of Bonnie Beecher. It is recorded by Tony Glover. The tape is often referred to as the Minneapolis Hotel Tape and is the basis for the first bootleg **Great White Wonder** and later **A Rare Batch Of Little White Wonder**.

### 3 RECORDINGS

- February or March The East Orange Tape
- 6 May Indian Neck Folk Festival
- May Minnesota Party Tape 1961.
- 29 July Hootenanny Special at Riverside Church
- 6 September The First Gaslight Tape.
- Late September Gerde's Folk City
- 30 September Carolyn Hester studio session
- 29 October WNYC Radio Studio
- 4 November Carnegie Chapter Hall
- 20 & 22 November Bob Dylan recording sessions

Late 1961	Billy James Interview.
23 November	First McKenzie's tape
4 December	Second McKenzie's tape
22 December	Minnesota Hotel Tape

For details about these tapes please refer to the corresponding session pages in Still On The Road.

## 4 FIRST ALBUM

This album was recorded during two session 20 and 22 November in the Columbia Studios in New York City. The following songs were recorded:

<b>Song</b>	<b># of takes</b>	<b>comment</b>
<i>You're No Good</i>	8	take 5 released on Bob Dylan
<i>Fixin' To Die</i>	3	take 3 released on Bob Dylan
<i>He Was A Friend Of Mine</i>	2	take 3 released on Bootleg Series
<i>House Of The Risin' Sun</i>	3	take 3 released on Bob Dylan take 4 overdubbed by unknown backing musicians, 8 December 1964, released on Interactive Music CD-ROM Highway 61 Interactive, Columbia/Graphix Zone CDAC 085700, February 1995.
<i>Talkin' New York</i>	2	take 2 released on Bob Dylan
<i>Song To Woody</i>	2	take 2 released on Bob Dylan
<i>Baby Let Me Follow You Down</i>	1	released on Bob Dylan
<i>Man Of Constant Sorrow</i>	4	take 4 released on Bob Dylan
<i>In My Time Of Dyin'</i>	1	released on Bob Dylan
<i>Man On The Street</i>	5	take 2 released on Bootleg Series
<i>(As I Go) Ramblin' Round</i>	2	unreleased
<i>Pretty Peggy-O</i>	2	take 2 released on Bob Dylan
<i>See That My Grave Is Kept Clean</i>	4	take 4 released on Bob Dylan
<i>Gospel Plow</i>	1	released on Bob Dylan
<i>Highway 51</i>	1	released on Bob Dylan
<i>Freight Train Blues</i>	1	released on Bob Dylan
<i>House Carpenter</i>	1	released on Bootleg Series

For more details about this session please refer to the corresponding session page in Still On The Road.

### Notes

The album was released 19 March 1962.

### Live history

<i>Fixin' To Die</i>	New York City 13 January 1962: Cynthia Gooding radio show: Folksinger's Choice.
<i>He Was A Friend Of Mine</i>	Finjan Club, Montreal 2 July 1962 and Universal Amphitheater, Los Angeles 24 February 1990: Roy Orbison Tribute.
<i>House Of The Risin' Sun</i>	debut: Entertainment Centre, Sydney 11 February 1986
<i>Talkin' New York</i>	Gerde's Folk City, New York City April or May 1962 and Town Hall, New York City 12 April 1963
<i>Song To Woody</i>	debut: Chicago Stadium, Chicago 3 January 1974
<i>Baby Let Me Follow You Down</i>	debut: Gaslight Café, New York City October 1962
<i>Man Of Constant Sorrow</i>	debut: Concord Pavilion, Concord, California, 7 June 1988
<i>Man On The Street</i>	Gaslight Café, New York City, New York 6 September 1961
<i>Pretty Peggy-O</i>	debut: Town Hall, New York City 12 April 1963
<i>See That My Grave Is Kept Clean</i>	Gerde's Folk City, New York City, New York, Late September 1961 and Gaslight Café, New York City, New York, October 1962
<i>Highway 51</i>	Town Hall, New York City 12 April 1963
<i>Freight Train Blues</i>	Unknown Location, New York City, New York, Late 1962

The following songs have probably never been played live:

*You're No Good*  
*In My Time Of Dyin'*  
*(As I Go) Ramblin' Round*  
*Gospel Plow*  
*House Carpenter*

There are no officially released live versions, except *Baby Let Me Follow You Down* on Bootleg Series Volume 4.

*Song To Woody*, *Baby Let Me Follow You Down*, *Man Of Constant Sorrow*, and *Pretty Peggy-O* have all been played during the Never-Ending Tour.

## 5 SONGS 1961

February	<i>Song To Woody</i>	Released on <b>Bob Dylan</b> . Performed live twice in 1974 and 1986 and a number of times on the never-ending tour
May	<i>Talkin' New York</i>	Released on <b>Bob Dylan</b> .
June	<i>East Colorado Blues</i>	Rumoured song.
August	<i>Talkin' Bear Mountain Picnic</i> <i>Massacre Blues</i>	First performed at Gerde's Folk City in June, 1961. A studio version was recorded in April 1962 for the <b>Freewheelin'</b> album.

September	<i>He Was A Friend Of Mine</i>	Arrangement by Bob Dylan.
	<i>Man On The Street</i>	Later recorded as a Leeds Music Demo. Covered by Dave van Ronk on the album <b>No Dirty Names</b> .
	<i>Talkin' Hava Nagilah Blues</i>	A studio version was recorded in April, 1962 for the <b>Freewheelin'</b> album.
Fall	<i>California Brown Eyed Baby</i>	Rumoured song.
November	<i>Hard Times In New York Town</i>	Later recorded as a Leeds Music Demo. An adaptation of the traditional <i>Ketty's Farm</i>
December	<i>Ballad Of The Ox Bow Incident</i>	Rumoured song.
	<i>I Was Young When I Left Home</i>	Adaptation/derivation from two songs, <i>900 Miles</i> and <i>Detroit City</i> .
	<i>Strange Rain</i>	Rumoured song.

## 6 SOURCES

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St. Martin's Press, 1995, 233 pages.
- Michael Krogsgaard** **Positively Bob Dylan A Thirty-Year Discography, Concert & Record Session Guide 1960-1991.**  
Popular Culture, Ink. 1991. 500 pages

## 7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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- Howard Sounes**      **Down The Highway. The Life Of Bob Dylan.** Groove Press 2001.

## 7.2 Article compilations

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## 7.3 Selected articles

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- Portrait of the Artist as a Younger Man** – interview by Billy James reprinted in Stephen Pickering's "Praxis: One"
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- Carolyn Hester Interview** – by Ian Woodward, Isis #50
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- Eric von Sschmidt Interview** – by Joseph Sia, On The Tracks #4 (Fall 1994)
- Eve McKenzie Remembers** – Mitch Blank, The Telegraph 56 (Winter 1997)
- Interview: Carolyn Hester** – The Telegraph 43 (Autumn 1992)
- Interview: Danny Kalb** – The Telegraph 47 (Winter 1993)
- Izzy's Notebooks** – The Telegraph 56 (Winter 1997)
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- Talkin' Folklore Center: Izzy Young** – interview by Jan Semneby, The Telegraph 56 (Winter 1997)
- The Wanted Man Interview: Robert Shelton** – The Telegraph 54 (Spring 1996)
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