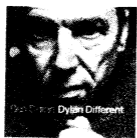


FEBRUARY 2010

BEN SIDRAN

Dylan Different (Nardis)



Bob Dylan is one of the greatest songwriters popular music has ever known. Few people would quibble with that statement. Arguing that Dylan is a great singer, on the other hand, will generate some discourse. OK, face it: The guy's voice grates on your nerves. This is why Dylan tribute albums are so alluring. We get to hear his songs *performed by other people!* It's the best of both worlds.

Ben Sidran's new album really does offer the best of both worlds. Sidran—a 66-year-old pianist, singer, songwriter, producer, author and radio host—has recorded one of the finest Dylan tributes out there. For *Dylan Different*, Sidran took a dozen of the songwriter's tunes and gave them jazzy arrangements. Sidran's classy, nuanced playing—often on the Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer and Hammond B3—is as central to the point as his relaxed, half-singing, half-talking vocals, which recall Mose Allison.

Highlights? They're all highlights, from the cool amble of "Everything Is Broken" and the bouncy, handclap-punctuated "Tangled Up in Blue" to the laid-back rhythm-and-blues of "Gotta Serve Somebody" and the late-night noir of "Ballad of a Thin Man." Remember this moment: In late 2009, while Bob was embarrassing himself with a third-rate Christmas album, he got out-Dylan'd. **STEVE**

GREENLEE