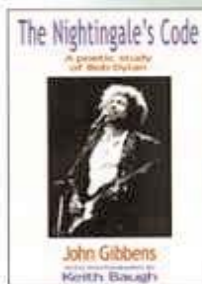




...by Paul Donnelley

A mixed bag this issue. An enigma, an idiot, a sexy singer and a bundle of sexbombs are our subjects.

I doubt there are many people who know as much about Bob Dylan as John Gibbens. I doubt even Bob Dylan knows as much about Bob Dylan as John Gibbens. Mr Gibbens, himself a talented singer-songwriter and leader of the folk group The Children, must have listened to Dylan's songs more times than he cares to remember to compile **The Nightingale's Code A Poetic Study of Bob Dylan (Touched Press, £10)**. This book is obviously a

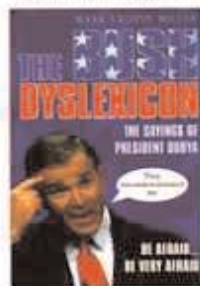


labour of love for Mr Gibbens, a devoted Dylan fan – in fact, it was twenty years in the making. Mr Gibbens met the photographer Keith Baugh whose previously unpublished photographs illustrate the work at a time when Margaret Thatcher was

Prime Minister, Tesco was open from 9 to 5 and police stations 24 hours a day as opposed to today when Tesco is open 24 hours a day and it seems police stations from 9 to 5! In the intervening two decades Mr Gibbens has studied Dylan's musical outpouring carefully but always interestingly analysing, explaining, questioning, reasoning. It is not just Dylan's story that is told in this book but Mr Gibbens also looks at the gestation of the blues as we know the genre. I must admit that I am not an unreconstructed Dylan admirer. Until I read this book I could take or leave the music but Mr Gibbens's is an engaging not to mention persuasive author. I was hooked. For more details about Mr Gibbens's work, you can consult the website www.touched.co.uk.

Some regard Bob Dylan as a genius. No one is ever going to call George W. Bush a genius. Undoubtedly, he is the most inarticulate, illiterate "dumb-ass" to get to the White House. Notice that I didn't say "elected to the White House". Because he wasn't. President Bush is the most powerful man in the world today because he holds office thanks to the Supreme Court justices appointed by his dad and another half-wit Ronald Reagan. Author Mark

Crispin Miller has written a searing and often scary indictment of George W. Bush **The Bush Dyslexicon (Bantam Books, £6.99)**. It seems remarkable that America keeps sending Republicans to the White House when you look at their track record. Richard Nixon resigned in disgrace. Ronald Reagan illegally sent money to the Contras in Nicaragua despite being forbidden by Congress. George Bush, his Vice President, issued pardons to several high-ranking members of that administration in case they had done anything wrong. He also sired the idiot who now sits in the Oval Office. Dubya, it appears, can only speak coherently when he is either drunk (and Mr Miller produces several examples that show Bush in his cups some time after he signed the pledge) or speaking on a subject that shows just what a nasty piece of work that he really is, such as sentencing criminals to death. The Republicans made great play of President Bill Clinton's supposed draft dodging but how many medals did Dubya win in Vietnam? Erm, none. Strings were pulled to get him into the Texas Air National Guard, nick-named "the Champagne Unit"



because of the numerous rich Houstonians who joined so that they could stay in America. The Republican Party in their determination to get Bush elected pulled out all the stops and dirty tricks. At the same time they were trying to get the hand recount stopped in Florida (governed by Bush's little brother Jeb) they were insisting on hand recounts in New Mexico. Bush is the man who makes Dan Quayle seem like Oscar Wilde. Bush apparently thinks Greeks are Grecians, the East Timorese are East Timorians, Kosovars are Kosovarians, and once opined "We cannot let terrorists or rogue nations hold this country hostile or hold our allies hostile", before calling the zealots who destroyed the twin towers "These folks". Of his offspring the thirsty Jenna Bush and her twin Barbara, Bush once said, "Laura and I don't realise how bright our children is until we get an objective analysis." This is the middle-aged man who sits in church holding his dad's hand. To paraphrase the presidential sign-off "God help America."

Shania Twain was a wannabe country singer who married a reclusive but brilliant record producer and became a phenomenally successful pop star with hits like *Man! I Feel*

Like a Woman! Robin Eggar has written **Shania Twain The Biography (Headline, £17.99)**, a sympathetic but entertaining read. Born Eileen Edwards in a small Canadian town she was dumped by her



father and adopted by an Ojibway Indian. At the age of 8 she began singing in lumberjack bars to drunks. Her road to stardom was littered with hardships (she had to look after her baby sister and two teenage half-brothers when their parents died) but it was

the marriage to the shy and retiring Mutt Lange, seventeen years her senior, that set Shania on her way. Shania didn't directly help Mr Eggar in writing this book but nor did she put obstacles in his path either. A nicely produced work that would make an ideal Christmas gift for a Shania fan... unless, of course, they couldn't wait and rushed out to immediately buy a copy.

Finally, **Keeping the British End Up (Reynolds & Hearne, £15.95)** is a guide to saucy British films. Simon Sheridan goes into great detail about such British classics as *I'm All Right, Jack*, *Confessions of a Pop Performer* and many, many others. The book includes a comprehensive chronology of British



sex films from 1958 beginning with *Nudist Paradise*. Each film is reviewed and rated and cast and crew credits appended. Copiously illustrated, we even get to see Joanna Lumley's breasts from *Games That Lovers Play*. (The poster has a strangely leering Richard Wattis gawping at two women in bed together – not something that was ever likely to occur in real life.) We even get to see *Emmerdale's* Richard Thorpe (Alan Turner) being kissed by a naked girl and co-star Christopher Chittell (Eric Pollard) romping with a girl in *Erotic Inferno*. The book finishes with a series of mini-biographies of the movers and shakers in the industry. A great read and a useful companion to all those Friday late-night films on Channel 5!