

## Dylan and Dylan

The Monterey Peninsula's celebrated bard and biographical dramatist Taelen Thomas collaborates with artists Richard Rosen and Steve Mortensen for a beguiling excursion into the lives, minds and works of two passionate and unpredictable literary geniuses who share a name: Dylan Thomas and Bob Dylan.

Central Coast poetical showman Thomas, who himself hails from the Welsh lineage of Thomases of the earlier Dylan, has presented his many unique and diverse performances of famous poets, writers and singular characters over the past 30 years. And he is a captivating reciter of his own fine poetry.

In "Dylan and Dylan," Thomas with musicians Rosen and Mortensen present a rare and original interweaving of these two titanic figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century--a brilliant concept, masterfully executed by this engaging trio. Thomas has been performing the works of Dylan Thomas for decades. Mortensen brings accomplished guitar skills and singing in Dylan's gruff vocal style. Harmonica virtuoso Rosen adds the third lyrical voice to this magical double-Dylan celebration.

The trio deftly interlaces poetry, music and narrative to reveal the thematic and life story likenesses between these two great literary voices. Words and songs mirror one another in themes of youth, love, the horrors of war, the joys of beauty, lusty courtship and the mysteries of life and death. In addition to their poetic brilliance, the two Dylans share qualities of crusty individualism and a challenging way with social norms. The alchemy of their deep, passionate and oracular writing, speaking from two wings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, create a fascinating resonance.

The performance takes a delightful turn in the telling of the tales wherein Dylan Thomas and Bob Dylan each spent time in our region meeting with local luminaries, stirring creativity and controversy. Humor bubbles throughout "Dylan and Dylan."

Thomas, Rosen and Mortensen bring a joyful zeal to this show. The three men come across as spiritual brothers of the Dylans, delivering the elements of story, poetry and song with love, understanding and strong commitment to the powerful messages of these two monumental figures.

In 2016, Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize in Literature. Dylan Thomas did not receive this honor, though perhaps he would have had he not died young when his fame was rising.

Professor Horace Engdahl, who gave Dylan's presentation speech in Stockholm, observed that when a master appears, the estimation of what is great and small, high and low in literature is nullified.

“What matter the rank of a work when its beauty is of the highest rank?” he said. “That is the straight answer to the question of how Bob Dylan belongs in literature: as the beauty of his songs is of the highest rank,”

Certainly, the same can be said of Dylan Thomas. “Dylan and Dylan,” in its own way, eloquently makes this case.

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