Scorsese’s Dylan documentary returns to mid-’70s with zany irreverence

It’s a brave new world of movie watching, what with bigger televisions and better sound systems for home viewing. Even I’m thinking my 40-inch flat-screen might be too small and my sound bar too inadequate. Additionally, new channel choices for streaming films have also been announced. Netflix, the behemoth content creator, prudesly acting as if it honestly respects the rules of the Academy Of Motion Picture Arts And Sciences, is willing to show some of its own movies in theaters before releasing them on its streaming channel. Hopefully. Perhaps the same sort of thing will happen with Oscar folks and serious exhibitors.

Historically, in order for a movie to be eligible for an Academy Award, it has to play a week in a theater in Los Angeles County. This brings me to Bob Dylan, Martin Scorsese, and an adventure staging concerts out of altruism and a dedication to one’s fans. “Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story By Martin Scorsese” is a Netflix production that played to theaters in a handful of major cities earlier this month. It’s now delighting fans of the troubadour from Minnesota, who are turning the 142-minute documentary into a much-discussed adventure in musical momentсты and the joys of repeat streaming.

The movie, directed by Scorsese with Dylan’s immensely irreverent cooperation, follows the singer and his own brand of Shifty Bananas (me involuntarily) as they play concerts in 55 cities during two separate excursions. Autumn 1975 saw the Rolling Thunder Revue in the northeastern United States and Canada, and Spring 1976 finds them in the south and west. The footage, with image and sound restored and enhanced by Scorsese and his team, reveals a relaxed Dylan, who was tired of performing in huge arenas. He wanted to sing in small venues and charge low prices, so that fans could be close to the stage and also be able to afford the tickets, which would be affordable.

Typical of the tour stops was an appearance on Saturday, November 15, 1975 in Niagara Falls, New York, at the Convention Center. Dylan wanted to avoid nearby Buffalo’s Memorial Auditorium. There were two sold-out shows in The Falls, one in the afternoon and one in the evening at 9:00. In Niagara Falls, Dylan was accompanied on stage by violinist Scarlet Rivera, and on the ramshackle escalator to the stage, one could see talking briefly to some of the tour staff. However, van Dorp reveals some difficult filming secrets, including that of the tour manager, who is Bette Midler, who you can see talking briefly to Dylan way back in 1975. Talk about an interesting scene to film.

Toomay, wide receiver Ahmad Rassbh, offensive tackle Ralph Maughan, and legendary running back O.J. Simpson. Dylan and others in his traveling musical circus also spent time before the concerts touring the world-famous falls. In addition to Dylan, the Rolling Thunder Revue consisted of numerous other singers, writers, and hang-outs, some of them regulars of the tour, but some coming and going. Singers Pattie Smith and Eric Anderson are seen as part of the build-up: Playwright Sam Shepard, musician T Bone Burnett, and actress Ronee Blakley are all caught on film.

There are a number of fascinating interviews from Scorsese’s life and completely engaging documen-
tary, and the best core-ative around Dylan. He comes across as a privy and master of ceremonies, a pleasant man making white makeup or a see-through plastic mask, unsure of what will happen on stage. This is Bette Midler, who you can see talking briefly to Dylan way back in 1975. Talk about an interesting scene to film.

The rolling Thunder Revue is back, an adventure staging concerts out of altruism and a dedication to one’s fans. “Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story By Martin Scorsese” is a Netflix production that played to theaters in a handful of major cities earlier this month. It’s now delighting fans of the troubadour from Minnesota, who are turning the 142-minute documentary into a much-discussed adventure in musical moments and the joys of repeat streaming.