



MUSIC

The 80 Greatest Dylan Covers of All Time

From Hendrix, Baez, and the Byrds to Cher, Adele, and the Roots, our list of the 80 greatest covers of Bob Dylan's songs

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FOR BOB DYLAN'S 80th birthday we've compiled our list of the 80 greatest covers of his songs — a collective gift back to him to say thank you for everything he's given us. The list has songs recorded by his folk peers nearly 60 years ago, and others from as recently as last year. Getting down to 80 wasn't easy. As the greatest songwriter of all time, Dylan has inspired thousands of covers of his songs by artists from every corner of music. Our picks include everyone from Hendrix, Baez, and the Byrds to Cher, Adele, and the Roots.

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Dylan loved the idea of other people doing his songs, and it's amazing how many songs here were recorded many times by other artists before the man himself ever released his own versions; often, they lived whole other lives, evolving and changing over the years, with his idea of the song as only a blueprint. And because there are so many kinds of Dylan songs, there's a vast array of different kinds of Dylan covers: R&B singers love relaxing into the contours of "Lay Lady Lay"; country singers like his rootsy stuff; indie-rockers key into his sad side; heroic rock singers love scaling the peaks of open-ended classics — like "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" or "Like a Rolling Stone" — finding their own way to make new meanings amidst the intersecting, and often contradictory, emotions and ideas that can roil around within one Dylan song. Even weird, tossed-off or straight-up bad Dylan songs can make for great covers.

Upon reading this, true fans will immediately think of their own favorite covers that didn't make the list. And that's part of the fun. This story leads in a million directions. The road always ends wherever you're at right now.