



Photography: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

## positively dylan

*"Everybody wants to know why he couldn't adjust/Adjust to what, a dream that bust?"*

Those lyrics from Bob Dylan's 1985 "Clean-Cut Kid" amount to what might have been said about the 66-year-old folk-poetic troubadour, had he never left Minnesota for Greenwich Village in 1961 and forever changed rock. Today, you don't have to be a Dylan-ologist to understand it was Bob's lack of fitting in — to say nothing of his ability to rewrite countless societal dreams ("The Times They Are A-Changin'" and "Like a Rolling Stone" among them) — that render his influence vital not only to music, but to verse, fashion and the concept of artistic rebellion. This month's Dylan-endorsed biopic, *I'm Not There*, stars six actors — including one skinny Cate Blanchett, boasting Bob's '60s Afro — with a statement that no one can pin the staunchly independent prophet down, and that that's what we love about him. First, it was an earnest Huck Finn portrayal: acoustic folk, speak-singing, engineer caps, sheepskin jackets and work shirts. Then, polka-dot button-downs and black Wayfarers, while his raspy protest songs rocked the cultural unconscious. Soon, Dylan went electric, pissed off a huge swath of his fans and turned more mod, sporting skinny blazers and striped scarves. The '70s brought makeup (eyeliner and whiteface) along with the epic album *Blood on the Tracks*, and, in the '90s, he donned western ties while expanding the literary breadth of his lyrics and starting to rock the Nobel literature committee (he had studied in the schools of Dylan Thomas, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg). And so today's return of singer-songwriters, artists that cross genres, and the new bevy of Ray-Bans, "hipster" style and linguistic bite in our paragraphs remind us not just that Dylan changed the way we look at the world, but that Dylan also changed the way Dylan looked at the world every chance he got — so he would never become land-stuck and "tangled up in blue." In short, the dream didn't bust. With Dylan's influence, it multiplies and continues to diversify itself, "freewheelin'." —Adam Baer