

Art Work that Rocks!

By Helen Marketti

Bob's artwork was becoming more familiar and word was spreading about his creative talents. Bob's first concert poster for a "famous" person was Bob Dylan. "Bob liked the art work and wanted to know if something could be done for him. Believe it or not, I spelled his name wrong on the poster!" Bob laughs. "It's D-y-l-a-n but I had spelled it D-y-l-o-n."

Eventually Bob left Vancouver and moved to San Francisco. "The whole music scene back then seemed focused and based in San Francisco. It was a fabulous place for moving around." Bob continued moving around until he ended up living in Los Angeles in the Laurel Canyon neighborhood. "Laurel Canyon really was a magical place to live," remembers Bob. "San Francisco was all concrete but at least in Laurel Canyon there was a bit of country side to it with trees and shrubs. I lived above a garage that was once the home of Hollywood actor, Errol Flynn," Bob said. "Down the street was Houdini's castle. Frank Zappa lived in Tom Mix's old house, which had a bowling alley inside. I had a friend who lived in Charlie Chaplin's house. So many movie stars lived there and had access to people to create their fantasylands for their homes as they did for their movie sets. They had designers create special effects for them." It sounds fitting to some degree that emerging rock stars of the 60s lived in a neighborhood that was once occupied by Hollywood's silver screen legends with their magical bells and whistles.

Bob continues, "You could walk down any street in Laurel Canyon and hear music coming from every house. Joni Mitchell lived down the street from me and I could hear her playing the piano. I enjoyed living there."

Living in Los Angeles provided more opportunities for Bob's art work to be visible. "I started doing some work for Bill Graham who ran The Fillmore and I also did work for Chet Helms who managed the Avalon Ballroom. I also did a lot of ads for The Whiskey a Go Go. I admired all of

the musicians and what they were doing. I saw historical moments."

When asked if a band's image or their music plays a role in his poster art Bob said, "I take that into consideration more now than I did then. Back then I just did what I wanted to do. My work is now more art nouveau."

It takes Bob about three weeks to a month to work on a poster. "They're very involved. I've created a monster for myself," laughs Bob. "The music industry gives more advanced notice, it seems. If someone requests my work, they give me plenty of time to work on it before they need it. Sometimes advertising agencies need a poster in 24 hours so then I'm up all night."

Bob feels that people still ask for his work because they still like the look of the 60s style. "I've done artwork for Blues Festivals, Shakespearean Festivals and the San Francisco Opera. They are all different genres and yet they still asked me to do



their posters. They still like that look from the 60s."

"It's a very selfish thing that artists do. It's not a commercial art. It's a fine art. I would like to turn the world onto it. I want people to see this style. I'm the vehicle to pass it through."

For more information about Bob Masse and his concert poster artwork, please visit: www.bmasse.com and www.myspace.com/bobmasse

Bob does sell artwork through his web site and will autograph his posters upon request. Prices will vary.



"I knew what I wanted to do from day one. As a kid, I did a lot of cartooning and drawing hot rods. One of my favorite things to draw was Mad Magazine. I was fortunate enough to know then what I wanted to do with my life," said Bob.

Bob Masse is one of the well-known concert poster and album cover artists from the late 60s generation. His artwork has graced the walls of The Fillmore, the Avalon Ballroom and The Whiskey a Go Go. He has created his signature poster look for Janis Joplin, The Who, The Byrds, Bob Dylan, The Grateful Dead, The Doors and many others.

Still active in concert poster and album cover creations as well as other projects, Bob's work has been requested by Apple Computers, Tori Amos, Fiona Apple and John McLaughlin to name a few. He was also asked to design a poster for the 40th year celebration of Woodstock.

Like great rock and roll, Bob's artwork is still sought after by collectors, admired by music fans and revisited again for the nostalgic look of the psychedelic era.

Originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, Bob went to art school where his plans were to be an illustrator or a commercial artist. "My friends and I hung out at coffee houses. A friend of mine had a cousin who fancied himself to be a Beatnik so we hung out with him, went to clubs and listened to music. By then things had evolved into the folk music era," Bob explains. "One of our college assignments involved marketing your work and getting yourself out there. So I started approaching club owners and the musicians and asked them if I could draw a poster for them for free. This was my way of showing my work, meeting the musicians and getting free tickets."

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