

# Dylan protege has her own act

By William Plyler  
Tar Heel Contributor

In an age when musicians seem overly image-conscious, Scarlet Rivera is an exception to the rule.

The talented violinist of Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue of two years ago shuns sensationalism both on and off stage. As with all art forms, performance speaks louder than the creator's personal image.

The only female on solo contract with Warner Brothers Records, Rivera has responded with a highly successful debut album, "Scarlet Rivera", as well as an impressive new release, "Scarlet Fever." Plans for a third album are already brewing.

The introverted Rivera answers questions with the brevity of a guilty politician. Asked what she gained most from playing with Dylan she answered, "the confidence to perform in front of people."

Though she prefers to downplay her association with the legendary Dylan, who in 1975 literally picked her up off a New York street, Rivera did provide some insight into the experience.

She said she was surprised at the

undisciplined atmosphere Dylan generated between performances. Unlike most perfectionists, Dylan allowed total freedom offstage. One got the feeling this freedom included the liberty to party.

Asked whether she is interested in political matters, she issued an emphatic "no, no, definitely not."

Even more unexpected was her reaction to Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, whose murder trial was the reason for the assemblage of the Rolling Thunder Revue. About the boxer's murder conviction, Miss Rivera calmly said, "Obviously he did it, or he wouldn't be in jail." Such opinions illustrate the sincerity of Dylan's concern for individualism among his band members.

Though apolitical on specific issues, Rivera is not naive about the human condition. She possesses a thorough knowledge of Eastern religions and strongly believes in the unity of mankind.

Her spiritualism has a definite effect on her daily existence. Asked if she feels uncomfortable about being the only female on her current tour, Rivera said, "If I did, I would be with the wrong people. I judge people by

what they feel inside, not by their sex."

While Scarlet Rivera might dismiss physical beauty as a secondary concern, her own appearance certainly does not suggest smugness. Her jet black, thigh-length hair and dark, intense eyes combine to captivate even the most aloof of audiences.

She began taking private violin lessons in the second grade. Though her musical background is primarily classical, she blends rock, blues, jazz, gospel, and gypsy to create her own unique sound.

Despite rumors that a reshuffling of band members is forthcoming, Rivera's backup band, Black Rose,



## film

By Jim East

In spite of the apparent flaws of Mazursky's latest explication of American couples, *Unmarried Woman* was an interesting approach to the threadbare theme of lovers cast away. The objective of the eternal, connubial dyad is passed over. In its place is the viable alternative of self-willed independence (an objective selfishness) with a mutual respect for the opposite sex — from a distance, thank you very much — without the relinquishment of personal control.

The classic entry of a young woman married to a young business man was a bit overbearing. But as an essential prop for the development of Erica's insecure foundation, it served its purpose. It was to demonstrate her general lack of control over the circumstances which surrounded her. And too, it was to underscore the irrational investment of time and personal interest in an unpredictable and illusive objective — he chose the moment for sex, he chose the moment to part. The first movement of the film ends with Erica's vomiting on the streets of New York.

In the counseling sessions which begin the second movement of the film, Erica reveals the issue of fear. But as the sense of it unfolds, it is really the interruption of the routine, her overwhelming dependence on the male counterpart that is at issue. The interaction of men with women is clearly the foundation of her spiritual objective. She lived without personal interests.

Still without direction, the second movement continues with Erica's experimentation. It begins with an objective and resolute admittance of her singleness — she stacks all of her husband's things on his desk. It is done.

complements her nicely. Bass player Ed Mikenas stands out from his cohorts both in his music and in his appearance. Completely bald on top, Mikenas sports long red hair from the perimeter, along with a lengthy unkempt beard. His solid rhythm and impressive solos constitute the only extraneous entertainment on the show.

Scarlet Rivera is the show. Unlike violinists Papa John Creech and Vassar Clements, she manages to avoid the monotonous repetition of chords. Her songs, most of which she composes herself, possess a rare sweetness and fluidity which distinguish her from others.

And then there is an impromptu sexual engagement with a gallery painter which represents a second virginal deflowering of sorts. But more importantly, it was an act which sealed the period of self-imposed chastity. It was an impersonal, self-gratifying moment of her choosing.

Yet, the model of men and women emotionally involved is still at Erica's ear. And so in the third movement of the film, with another sexual encounter her impersonal barrier weakens. She begins to fall in love with an artist who is an expert in, of all things, abstract painting.

Oh the beginning had all of the makings of a real love story. But the regressive motif of domination was too apparent for the burgeoning objectivist Erica. First Saul sweeps her into his arms, gushing, "you're my Victorian lady." And later he confers his "approval" on her intentions of going back to school. It cannot be.

So the film ends with Saul driving off to Vermont for the summer and Erica tacking down the New York streets, masting an abstract canvas sail, Saul's painting, toward her home.

It couldn't have ended any other way. She couldn't have gone to Vermont. The postulates for the new Erica were solidified in a refiner's fire of sensibility, not sensualism. Saul, the abstract artist, the personification of the non-objective, in which lines, shapes, and colors are without reference to recognizable objects, was an unpredictable, illusive entity.

The recurrence of the thing rings home clearly for Erica with Saul's smashing of the token jar of pickled herring. It was a personal symbol for him which grew to a point of reference for the two of them. The final crashing of the jar against the wall was a signal of the regressive nature on the part of Saul's assertion of dominion. It was to harden the resolve of Erica.

The conclusion was a reconciliation of sorts. It was a mutual admiration of personal objectives. Erica choosing a course of rational investment in personal interest (greater predictability), and Saul's continuing his work.

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