

ALBUM

by David Rimmer
Billy (16) - Boo (16)

The Play: A comedy about growing up and coming of age in the turbulent sixties, *Album* spans three-and-a-half years from October 1963 to June 1965, and chronicles the adventures and misadventures of two teenaged couples, Peggy and Billy, and Trish and Boo. The action takes them from playing strip poker in Trish's bedroom to summer camp and graduation day. Along the way there is a wonderful counterpoint of the popular music of the day—The Beatles, The Doors, The Rolling Stones, and Bob Dylan—underscoring their hopes and dreams, and their fears and insecurities. *Album* is a sometimes frank yet poignantly humorous look at those last carefree years of youth.

The Scene: "Ain't It Just Like the Night": November 1965 in Billy and Boo's dorm room at boarding school. Bob Dylan's "Positively 4th Street" is playing on the record player. Boo, always full of energy, is moving with the music and singing along. Billy, more cool and together, is a bit bored; he is idly playing with a football.

Special Note: This edition incorporates changes in dialogue specified by the author in the acting edition.

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BOO: See? What'd I tell ya? Greatest song of all time.

BILLY: (*Holding back.*) It's all right.

BOO: It's all right? That's the greatest song I ever heard in my life. It's all right. (*Dylan voice.*) Such an incredible drag for me to see you. He's greater than the Beatles.

BILLY: How can he be greater than the Beatles? They're four guys. That's stupid.

BOO: (*Dylan voice.*) Got some kinda nerve sayin' you're my friend.

BILLY: (*Acting tough.*) Oh yeah? Who said I was?

BOO: You. (*Beat.*) 'Bout time this song came out up here. Takes everything ten years to get here. (*Dylan.*) This place's so slow, it's invisible. —I can't believe you didn't like that song.

BILLY: What song?

BOO: Aarrhh! I'm gonna kill you!

BILLY: (*Jumps off the bed; fists up.*) Put up your dukes.

BOO: (*Beginning to laugh.*) Wh—? Put up my dukes?... That's stupid— (*Both of them jockeying around each other like fighters in the ring, giggling.*)

BILLY: What's stupid?

BOO: You're stupid—

BILLY: —Oh yeah?—

BOO: You're brain-damaged—

BILLY: Where ya think I got it from? Hangin' around spastics like you—

BOO: Whoa...vicious...

BILLY: Whoa... (*Viciously sarcastic.*) Awww...

BOO: (*Yelling; overlapping.*) How much time before dinner, dinkweed?

BILLY: HEY, MORONS!! (*Ducks; Boo dives under the bed.*) The clock onna Science Building says twenty to six.

BOO: Twenty minutes! I wanted to hear *Highway 61* and the first side... (*Billy fakes yawning, going to sleep.*) of *Bringing It All Back Home*. There's never enough time to do anything in this stupid place! I hate this school—

BILLY: Big deal, who doesn't?

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BOO: Every minute you hafta *do* somethin'. Can't stay up late, can't smoke cigarettes, hafta wear ties. It's always *daytime* here.

BILLY: (*Shrugs.*) Stay up all night.

BOO: Sure. They'd kick me right outta here. (*Sudden rage, frustration.*) *God, ya can't even stay up at night! Aaaaaaaaaaarrrrrh!!* (*Bitter chant.*) Give us this day our daily hate... —Bet Dylan never gets up during the daytime.

BILLY: He's a vampire.

BOO: Be cool to be a vampire. Cooler than this. Get to be invisible.

BILLY: See a lotta free movies.

BOO: Hey...I just remembered this dream I had last night.

BILLY: (*Scornful.*) What dream?

BOO: I was at this big posh party in London, at this really rich house. It was really high up, and there were these big picture windows, you could see the river and all the lights of the town. I was with a girl—you know who it was? Trish.

BILLY: That weirdo? What happened, she letcha go all the way or somethin'?

BOO: Nah, we were just lookin' out the window... And all these rich little old ladies started runnin' around all over the place, all excited, sayin' Mick Jagger's coming, isn't that wonderful, Mick Jagger's coming. They came up to us and they told us be careful cause the latest thing in London now was sadism, and Mick was really into it. Then they flitted away, laughin' and eatin' *hors d'oeuvres* and stuff, and everybody was just waitin' for Mick to show up. Finally he did, he just walked right in, Marianne Faithfull was with him—she had purple hair. And this whole crowd of little old ladies swarmed all around him. They introduced me to him, and he was incredibly scary-looking, his face, he really made me scared just lookin' at him. He had lipstick on and make-up and he was dressed like a woman, but it was more like he really *was* a woman, a woman and a man at the same time. All of a sudden he started pullin' my hair, really vicious, and he had these bracelets on that were made outta spikes, they jabbed into me, I saw drops of blood drippin' off 'em like a horror movie. I screamed or somethin', I just ran away I was so scared. I ended up in this room

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away from the party, nobody around, and I saw this guy sittin' on a couch, just sittin' there by himself, really quiet, watchin' TV. I sat down and watched the TV for a couple of minutes, then I turned and looked at the guy... and it was Dylan.

BILLY: Wow... I never get anybody like that in mine. All I ever get is all my aunts and uncles and cousins givin' me grief all the time. Always at these big family reunions...gross.

BOO: Hey, you wanna stay up all night tonight? It'll be cool, we can take No-Doz..

BILLY: Nah...

BOO: Nah... You never want to do anything. (*Muttering; pacing.*) Aahh... Gotta do somethin'... (*Suddenly excited.*) Hey! Did I tell you about that song?

BILLY: (*Mocking.*) Oh that song that song!

BOO: Yeah—

BILLY: (*Abrupt.*) What song?

BOO: That song. I told ya. The greatest song I ever heard—

BILLY: —Yeah yeah, there's about thirty of those—

BOO: —Remember? At the concert? Dylan. I told you—

BILLY: —sure sure—

BOO: —Your brain is like Swiss Cheese. —Oh right, I told my roommate.

BILLY: Think I'm brain-damaged...

BOO: Friend, roommate, what's the difference—? (*Billy slams a football into Boo's gut, then sings the Beatles' "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away." Boo, overlapping.*) —I heard it at the concert I went to at the end of the summer— Whaddayou doin'? (*Yelling over Billy's singing.*) Shut up! He played this new song, it was the first time he ever played it— *Hey!*

BILLY: (*Belting it like Dylan.*) Hey! Gotta hide your love away!

BOO: See? Even the Beatles imitate Dylan.

BILLY: The Beatles don't need to imitate nobody, specially Dylan.

BOO: Everybody needs to imitate Dylan.

BILLY: Yeah, you do it enough.

BOO: Whoa...vicious... (*Dylan voice.*) Got some kinda nerve—

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BILLY: —sayin' I'm your friend?
 BOO: You just got a lotta nerve, buddy. It's called "Visions of Johanna," it's not on an album yet, but it's greater than anything he ever did—
 BILLY: So let's hear it, world's greatest Bob Dylan fan.
 BOO: I don't have it, ya jerk, it isn't out yet.
 BILLY: So play somethin' else.
 BOO: *(Can't believe his ears.)* What? I'm gonna die. You wanna hear Dylan?
 BILLY: *(Muttered.)* ...Anything to get you to shut up... —Yeah sure, I like Dylan.
 BOO: Bull.
 BILLY: I do. I just like givin' you grief, that's all.
 BOO: *(Dubious.)* Okay. How about the flip side of "4th Street"?
 BILLY: *(Could care less.)* Sure.
 BOO: You're really crackin' up. *(Puts the record on, holding his hands up, signalling for silence, announcing.)* All right: "From a Buick 6." Produced by Bob Johnston, Al Kooper on organ, Michael Bloomfield on guitar.
 BILLY: Just play the record— *(“From a Buick 6” starts, volume way up. Billy shakes his head in disgust. Boo smiles, listens, closes his eyes, bops around.)* Hey! HEY!
 BOO: WHAT?
 BILLY: TURN IT DOWN!
 BOO: WH—? NAH!
 BILLY: IT'S TOO LOUD!
 BOO: I LIKE IT LOUD!
 BILLY: I DON'T CARE, TURN IT DOWN!
 BOO: BITE THE HAIRY WAZOO! *(Billy goes to the record player, reaches for the volume. Suddenly the lights in the room flicker and go out, and the record player goes off. All the electricity is off. They're totally in the dark.)*
 BILLY: Hey! What is this—
 BOO: Aw jeez. The lights go out right in the middle of Dylan.
 BILLY: Think it's just your room or the whole dorm?

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BOO: *(Amused.)* Hey, this is cool.
 BILLY: Whaddaya think it is?
 BOO: I dunno, but we need two things.
 BILLY: What?
 BOO: Candles and a portable record player.
 BILLY: Whaddaya talkin' about?
 BOO: I got one over here. Used to be my sister's. Y'wanna hear the song, don'tcha? There's candles in the drawer—
 BILLY: Candles? Whaddaya have candles for?
 BOO: Just get 'em. I'll get the record player.
 BILLY: Candles, portable record player... What else ya got, a fallout shelter? *(Gets up cautiously, makes his way across the room, muttering.)* Can't see anything... *(Bangs into the bed.)* Ow! Why am I doing this?
 BOO: It's okay, just get your eyes used to it.
 BILLY: Yeah, great.
 BOO: *(Dylan.)* Don't get hung up on your eyelids.
 BILLY: *(Billy reaches the desk, opens the drawer and takes out the candles and matches. Boo finds the portable record player.)* Candles...weird...
 BOO: Hey. Billy.
 BILLY: What is it now?
 BOO: If I can make it over there without touching anything, everything'll be all right for the rest of our lives. Okay?
 BILLY: Okay. *(Boo begins moving slowly forward. But Billy lights the candle—)*
 BOO: Hey! —Okay, I'll close my eyes. *(He continues across the room, which is a little lighter now. Billy notices something out the window.)*
 BILLY: Hey.
 BOO: What?
 BILLY: C'mere, look at this.
 BOO: I gotta do this—
 BILLY: Put the record player down, Marston, look at this.
 BOO: What? *(He opens his eyes, puts it down on the desk, looks out*

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the window with Billy.)
 BILLY: The lights in the Dining Hall aren't on. See? And the Science Building... The clock stopped. See? And the Gym...
 BOO: It's great. Look at that star.
 BILLY: Look— All the lights in town are off!
 BOO: It's so dark you can see everything.
 BILLY: Huh?
 BOO: *(Dylan voice.)* Dark into nighttime...makin' daytime black...
 BILLY: Cut it out willya. Whadda we gonna do?
 BOO: *(Dreamy.)* Do?
 BILLY: Whadda we gonna do?
 BOO: Whaddaya mean?
 BILLY: *(Half-kidding.)* It's gotta be the Russians, right?, or the Martians, or whoever it's supposed to be on those Conelrad things.
 BOO: Nah, it's the Transylvanians, y'never hear about them any more, they're prob'ly still mad about Dracula.
 BILLY: Shut up. Whaddaya think it is?
 BOO: End of the world.
 BILLY: Get your radio.
 BOO: The transistor?
 BILLY: Yeah.
 BOO: It's not mine, it's my roommate's, I just borrow it after lights-out.
 BILLY: I don't care whose it is, just get it.
 BOO: Whaddaya want?
 BILLY: *Just get the radio, okay?*
 BOO: Okay.
 BILLY: If we get a station, then we'll know it's just a local thing, okay? *(Boo crosses to his bed and gets the radio from under the pillow. They sit on the bed, the radio in Boo's lap. He fakes turning it on, goes into a Dylan voice.)*
 BOO: HOW DOES IT FEEL? *(Billy doesn't laugh, his face set like stone. He grabs the radio from Boo and turns it on. No sound comes out. He turns the dial slowly around, getting nothing. Gets up, paces nervously.)*

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BILLY: All the radio stations are off!
 BOO: This radio isn't very strong—
 BILLY: —The batteries in?—
 BOO: —Yeah it's got—
 BILLY: —The whole country— It is somebody. It's the Russians, for God's sake.
 BOO: Russians don't believe in God.
 BILLY: What—? Don't be funny—
 BOO: Why not—?
 BILLY: —World War III— *(He turns suddenly and heads for the window, pokes his head out.)* What're those kids doin'?
 They're chasin' that kid! Hey! WHAT'S GOIN' ON? HEY! YOU GUYS! This place's goin' crazy—
 BOO: Take it easy, whaddaya tryin' to do, scare the pants offa me?
 BILLY: *(Heads for the door.)* I'm goin' out. I gotta find out what's happenin'—
 BOO: *(Stopping him.)* Whaddaya nuts? Whaddaya doin'? Don't go out there.
 BILLY: Why not?
 BOO: I don't know. Just don't. It's stupid.
 BILLY: Yeah...okay...uh... What time is it?
 BOO: Who cares what time it is? All the clocks stopped.
 BILLY: Hey! Watch it! I'm tellin' you—
 BOO: I'm sorry. Look, the best thing is just stay here, see what happens. Really. C'mon. This is fun.
 BILLY: Yeah...maybe...
 BOO: Least we got a record player here. Times like this ya need Dylan. *(He takes "Positively 4th Street" off the electric record player. Billy just watches him, dumb-struck.)* You don't think I'm gonna let myself get blown up without—
 BILLY: —You're crazy—
 BOO: —a little Dylan.
 BILLY: I don't believe this. The world's gonna blow up and you're—
 BOO: —Let's play "4th Street" again—
 BILLY: —Maybe not the whole world. Just certain parts of America.

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Like right here. (*Boo opens the portable, puts on the record.*) You can't play that now.

BOO: Why not? (*Billy throws up his hands in disgust, giving up. "Positively 4th Street" starts. Boo turns the volume way up.*)

BILLY: (*Shouting over the sound.*) You really can't just sit here—

BOO: Sit down, have a good time—

BILLY: We gotta do somethin', find out what's goin' on—

BOO: So, Billy, I'll tell ya 'bout that song, that concert—

BILLY: (*Pacing madly.*) Where is everybody?

BOO: It was just him the first half, playin' guitar, had his harmonica 'round his neck—

BILLY: (*Holding his ears.*) —so loud!— (*Turns the volume down.*)

BOO: —played "Love Minus Zero," "Mr. Tambourine Man," stuff like that—

BILLY: Whaddayou talkin' about?

BOO: —then he brought out the guys in the band— (*Whips the volume back up high.*) —and a few kids booed, not too many, he looked kinda happy about that—

BILLY: Shut up!—

BOO: —I hate all those folk music jerks, music's so much cooler when everything's plugged in—

BILLY: WILL YOU SHUT UP!!

BOO: HEY!

(*Billy yanks the record off. Boo shoves him. Billy shoves him back. Boo lunges for him. They scuffle madly, grappling, arms pumping, flailing wildly. After a minute, they pull away, ready like wrestlers, crouching, feinting.*)

BOO: Leave my records alone!

BILLY: I'm so sick of Dylan—

BOO: I'm so sick of you— (*Boo jumps at him, yelling. They fight each other insanely, in close contact, bashing into furniture, pushing each other all over the room, finally falling on the floor. Billy easily takes Boo, getting him in a vise-like half-nelson, then pushes him away. Boo stays on the floor, Billy gets to his feet.*)

BILLY: Now cut it out! You're really outta your mind!

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BOO: (*Bitterly sarcastic.*) Put up your dukes...

BILLY: Shut up! Dylan. Whaddaya in love with him? All you ever say—

BOO: (*scornful, nasty.*) I thought you liked him.

BILLY: I just said that to get you to shut up. Every minute— You're like a girl. (*Boo rises to his feet, singing the last verse of "Positively 4th Street" as loud as he can, screaming lines like "I wish that for just one time you could stand inside my shoes" and "You'd know what a drag it is to see you" to show his crazed anger. Billy screams to be heard over him, shoving him, belting his shoulder.*) SHUT UP! SHUT UP!!!! —What's good about him? He isn't cool, he can't sing. His songs're stupid, they don't make any sense. His voice stinks— (*They're facing each other, screaming simultaneously at the top of their lungs.*)

BILLY: IT STINKS!

BOO: BRAIN-DAMAGED!

STINKS!

YOU STINK!

HE STINKS!

SHUT UP!!

SHUT UP!!

(*Billy reaches the breaking point and hurls Boo head first into the door. A loud bang, and Boo crumples onto the floor, holding his face in pain. Billy backs away, shaking.*)

BILLY: I hate Dylan.

BOO: I hate you.

BILLY: (*Pacing, muttering.*) I can't take this.

BOO: You can't take anything. You're always so worried about everything—

BILLY: Don't gimme that—

BOO: You don't like anything— (*An involuntary cry pain escapes from Boo. He stifles it right away, hiding his face from Billy, who comes over to him.*)

BILLY: (*Scared.*) Are you okay?

BOO: (*Muttered bitterly.*) Put up your dukes...

BILLY: There's really somethin' wrong with you, Marston, I swear—

BOO: There's nothin' wrong with you...

BILLY: I never know what you're talkin' about—

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BOO: (*Spiteful Dylan voice.*) Your ears're in your back pocket, your eyes're on the ground.

BILLY: (*Gets mad again.*) See? (*Makes a move toward Boo, but stops himself in time. Stalks around the room, muttering, trying to figure things out. Boo stays where he is on the floor, not reacting to him at all, not moving. Stops, takes a long look at Boo.*) We just beat each other up over Bob Dylan. (*No response from Boo. Beat. Billy softens a little.*) Hey Boo, I— (*Doesn't know what to say. Takes out a piece of gum, about to offer it to Boo. Doesn't; tosses it aside.*) You wanna try and find out what's goin' on?

BOO: No.

BILLY: (*Voice of reason.*) Don'tcha wanna see what everybody's doin', find out about the lights?

BOO: I like it the way it is.

BILLY: Uh... okay. I'm gonna go. You be all right?

BOO: Yeh.

BILLY: I'll try and find somebody, see what's goin' on. Then maybe I'll—come back— Maybe the lights'll go back on.

BOO: Hope not.

BILLY: Okay, guess I'll...

BOO: Know what?

BILLY: What?

BOO: I'm the one that's brain-damaged.

BILLY: Take it easy...

BOO: I wanted that to happen. I planned it. (*They look at each other a second, look away. Beat.*) I didn't tell you about the song. The guys in the band came out, started playin' electric, really loud, and he was singin'. Never said anything, just stood up there, these blue lights on him, this halo around his hair, it looked like those fires on the edge of the sun.

BILLY: Hey, I'm gonna go—

BOO: Go ahead. (*Billy takes a candle, leaving one on the floor next to Boo. He crosses to the door, opens it.*)

BILLY: Bye. (*Boo doesn't look at him. Billy silently slips away, glancing down the corridor with the light from the candle. Exits.*)

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BOO: (*Dylan voice: soft, hoarse.*) You're invisible now. (*Beat.*) See, he wasn't sayin' anything before the songs. But this time he did. He said the next song was a new song, he never did it in front of anybody before, he hoped we liked it. (*Dylan voice: soft, far away.*) Hope ya like it. —And in the song he keeps seein' these visions of Johanna. He's in this motel room with Louise, but these visions keep comin' in. He tries to stop 'em, but they're everyplace he looks, and then his conscience explodes, and the visions take his place, and he just fades away, right in the song, this amazing song, and there's nothin' left 'cept these visions... All these visions... (*Stops, looks around the room. Looks out the window. Softly sings the opening of "Visons of Johanna," beginning "Ain't it just like the night..." After a couple of lines, he calms down a bit. Picks up the candle.*) Ain't never gonna get light again. (*Blows the candle out.*)