

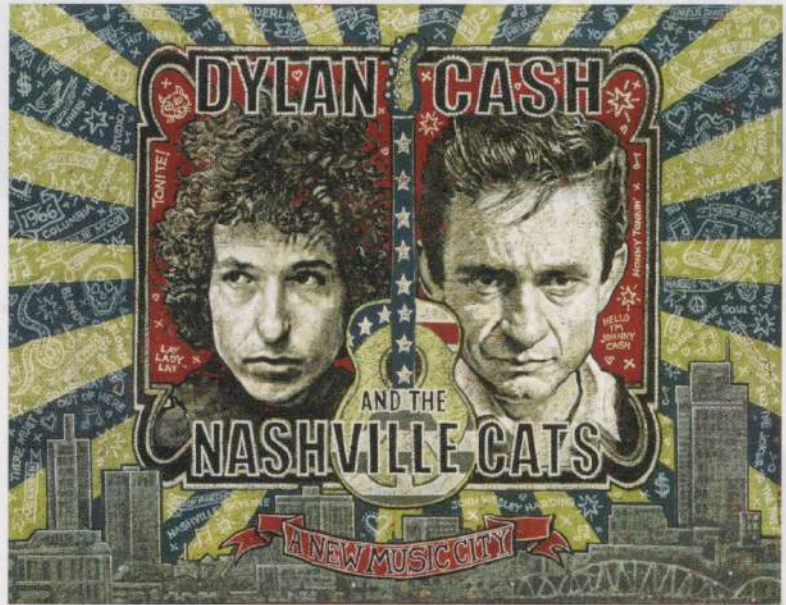
MARCH 2015

SPOTLIGHT | THE LIST

### EXHIBIT

## THE COOL CATS

Exploring how Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash changed Nashville forever



Two music icons—plus a bunch of their talented friends—are headed back to Nashville. Starting March 27 at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, *Dylan, Cash, and the Nashville Cats: A New Music City* will transport visitors to the late '60s and early '70s, giving them a glimpse of this pivotal moment in history.

The exhibit spotlights Cash's and Dylan's individual and collaborative work in Nashville as well as other well-known musicians who followed their lead, like Joan Baez, Leonard Cohen, and Simon & Garfunkel. The masterpieces these artists recorded here had a secret weapon: a group of world-class session players—including Charlie McCoy, Buddy Spicher, and Hargus "Pig" Robbins—called The Nashville Cats.

"I like the way [the exhibit] debunks a lot of lazy myths and preconceptions about the '60s and the city of Nashville itself," says Jon Langford, a musician and artist who was commissioned to create the exhibit's logo. "Rather than being some stiff, conservative

backwater at odds with the seismic cultural shifts of the day, Music City was at the very heart of the sonic innovations."

Langford is known for his layered paintings, usually in the form of portraits, and his portfolio includes Hank Williams and Elvis Presley. The exhibit's logo features portraits of pals Dylan and Cash, a rendering of Dylan's *Nashville Skyline* cover, and a graffiti-like background with the names of various Nashville Cats, song titles, and lyrics.

"My own paintings always contain lyrics from my songs," Langford explains. "The words we chose for the Dylan and Cash artwork highlight some of the amazing work that these two visionaries produced [...] with the help of Nashville's astounding pool of musical talent."

*Dylan, Cash, and the Nashville Cats* runs through December 2016 and will include various live performances, films, educational programs, panel discussions, and instrument demonstrations. (*Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum*, 222 Fifth Ave. S., 615-416-2001; [countrymusichalloffame.org](http://countrymusichalloffame.org)) —Aryn Van Dyke