

Weather watch



The meteorological Bob Dylan

Dylan knows which way the wind blows

By Joe Shute

“WELL, if you go when the snowflakes storm/
When the rivers freeze and summer ends/
Please see if she's wearing a coat so warm/
To keep her from the howlin' winds.”

So goes the 1963 song *Girl From the North Country* by Bob Dylan, the man we now know to be the greatest weather balladeer of them all. A study published in the Royal Meteorological Society's journal *Weather* and compiled by scientists from leading universities across Britain, has found Dylan cites the climate in his lyrics more than any other popular singer.

According to the research, 163 of Dylan's 542 songs make some meteorological reference. Interestingly, for the complex man from the harsh climes of northern Minnesota, the sun features far more prominently than talk of hurricanes and shelter from the storm.

Next in line are the Beatles. Out of 308 songs penned by the Fab Four, 48 made reference to the weather. Unlike the oblique lyrics of Dylan, some of the Beatles' music was inspired by actual meteorological events.

Here Comes the Sun was written by George Harrison following the bleak winter of 1969 when the first rays of spring crept through his window.

The researchers have claimed to be surprised at how many times the weather appears in songs, but this I find hard to believe. For where better place to seek inspiration than in the heavens above? Certainly, it is enough to feed this column each week.

I would suggest honouring the 900 singers and songwriters that the study found to have made mention of the weather, perhaps by playing a short burst of each during the TV forecasts.

It would serve as a reminder of our joyous obsession shared equally between scientific and creative minds. And, in the words of Bob Dylan, that you don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.