



Opening remarks by Peter Simon,  
Managing Director of the World Savings and Retail  
Banking Institute (WSBI) and the European Savings  
and Retail Banking Group (ESBG), Brussels

With its hard work and commitment, the foundation Oskar-Hacker-Stiftung is providing an outstanding service by showcasing not only Hohenstein Castle itself, but also – with this exhibition – a uniquely versatile and complex international artist. My congratulations to the Oskar-Hacker-Stiftung on this impressive exhibition, which is testimony to the fact that there is a deep well of love for Bob Dylan's artistic accomplishments.

In order to even come close to understanding all the different aspects of Bob Dylan, in addition to an abiding interest, one also needs to have a profound understanding of his ambivalent attitudes, not least to the different genres that he has explored. Outside of his narrow fan base, few were aware that, alongside his chameleon-like musical development, he was always quite devoted to further developing his talent in the visual arts. And the intensity of this focus was such that at times, it had the greatest possible influence not only on his musical creativity, but also on his personal life. His deep love for, and later estrangement from, his wife Sara speaks volumes in this regard. His immersion in the intellectual world of Russian-born artist and former boxer Norman Raeben, from whom Dylan took several art courses in the early 1970s, not only resulted, as Dylan himself said, in the breakdown of his marriage, but also led to the song "Sara", a quest for reconciliation that for me is one of his strongest musical works. In an interview about the first course he took from Raeben, Dylan said the following:

"I went home after that first day and from that day on my wife no longer understood me. It was then that our marriage began to fall apart. She never understood what I was talking about, what I was thinking about, and I couldn't even explain it."

Dylan is also ambivalent when dealing with the subject of money: although he knew how to make money from lingerie, car and computer adverts, in many of his works he authentically articulated better than almost anyone how tough life can be for people who have very little money at their disposal. Take, for example, his 1975 song "Money Blues", in which he vividly describes what it is like to not have enough money to pay for basic needs such as rent and food, and to not even have access to a bank account. This describes a condition that is unexpectedly topical right now for many artists around the world due to the pandemic. While the savings banks

and retail banks affiliated with the World Savings and Retail Banking Institute (WSBI) and the European Savings and Retail Banking Group (ESBG) are not always in a position to solve such problems, or to do so comprehensively, to the extent possible, they stand shoulder-to-shoulder, both in Europe and around the world, with artists who currently are going through such a hard time. Socially responsible economic and financial commitment to the region in which they operate is the DNA and guiding principle followed by all WSBI-ESBG savings banks and retail banks worldwide.

With that in mind, I would like to wish the best of luck and lots of success to the exhibition "80 Years of Bob Dylan" at Hohenstein Castle!

Peter Simon  
Managing Director, WSBI-ESBG