

Why is Dylan Thomas so popular in America? An American love affair

[Music: New York, Paloma Faith]

Matthew Rhys:

This is the White Horse Tavern, one of the oldest bars in New York.

In the 1950s Dylan Thomas was a popular patron here, enjoying not only its wares but its bohemian atmosphere.

Famously, or perhaps infamously, this is the last bar at which he drunk just before his death in 1953.

Dylan had always dreamt of coming to America. He was passionate about the movies, read American poetry and the artistic scene he found here suited the gregarious poet.

As someone working in New York, I can understand the allure of the city and Dylan's love of America.

What I've enjoyed discovering here is how much America loves Dylan in return.

Having played him in the film *The Edge of Love* I uncovered he was an incredibly complex character. Yes, he was charming and talented, but he was also a boastful, boozy womaniser.

It comes as no surprise that in this city his less desirable traits just add to his mythic status.

Little wonder why Dylan, who is arguably considered to be a poet of medium stature in the UK, is so popular over 3,000 miles from the "ugly, lovely town" where he was born.

Archive film footage courtesy of Getty.

Image of Dylan Thomas at the White Horse Tavern courtesy of The Granger Collection/TopFoto.

Image of Matthew Rhys from The Edge of Love courtesy of Rex Features.