

Woody Guthrie: the 100 most inspiring musicians of all time

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The songs of prolific American folksinger and songwriter Woodrow ("Woody") Wilson Guthrie (b. July 14, 1912, Okemah, Okla., U.S.—d. Oct. 3, 1967, New York, N.Y.) chronicled the plight of common people, especially during the Great Depression.

Woody Guthrie, the third of five children, was the son of a onetime cowboy, land speculator, and local Democratic politician who named him after Pres. Woodrow Wilson. His mother, who introduced her children to a wide variety of music, was thought to be mentally ill and was institutionalized when Guthrie was a teenager. Her erratic behavior

was actually caused by Huntington's disease, a hereditary neurological disorder about which little was known at the time and which would later afflict Guthrie too. The family lived near the relocated Creek nation in Okemah, Okla., a small agricultural and railroad town that boomed in the 1920s when oil was discovered in the area. The effect on the town and its people of the decline that followed the boom sensitized the young Guthrie to others' suffering, which he had also experienced firsthand through the calamities that befell his splintering family. (Guthrie paid particular attention to this period of his life in his autobiographical novel *Bound for Glory* [1943].)

Soon after his mother's institutionalization, Guthrie began "rambling" for the first time, coming to love life on the road. Though he often left Okemah to travel during his teens, he always returned to continue his high school education. At age 19 he relocated to Pampa, Texas, where he married Mary Jennings, with whom he had three children. When the Great Depression deepened and drought turned a large section of the Great Plains into the Dust Bowl, making it impossible for Guthrie to support his family, he again took to the road. Like so many other displaced people from the region (collectively called "Okies" regardless of whether they were Oklahomans), he headed for California, playing his guitar and harmonica and singing in taverns, taking odd jobs, and visiting hobo camps as he traveled by freight train, hitchhiked, or simply walked westward.

In Los Angeles in 1937, he landed a spot performing on the radio, first with his cousin, Jack Guthrie, then with Maxine Crissman, who called herself Lefty Lou. At that time Guthrie began songwriting in earnest, giving voice to the struggles of the dispossessed and downtrodden while celebrating their indomitable spirit in songs such as "Do Re Mi," "Pretty Boy Floyd," and "Dust Bowl Refugee."

Guthrie's politics became increasingly leftist, and by the time he moved to New York City in 1940 he had become an important musical spokesman for labor and populist sentiments, embraced by left-leaning intellectuals and courted by communists. In New York, to which he had brought his family, Guthrie became one of the principal songwriters for the Almanac Singers, a group of activist performers—including Leadbelly, Pete Seeger, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, and Cisco Houston—who used their music to attack fascism and support humanitarian and leftist causes.

In 1941 Guthrie made his first recordings, with folklorist

Alan Lomax, and traveled to the Pacific Northwest, where a commission to write songs in support of federal dam building and electrification projects produced such well-known compositions as "Grand Coulee Dam" and "Roll On Columbia." Back in New York after serving as a merchant marine during World War II, his first marriage having ended in divorce, Guthrie married Marjorie (Greenblatt) Mazia, a Martha Graham Dance Company dancer with whom he would have four children (including son Arlo, who would become an important singer-songwriter in his own right in the 1960s).

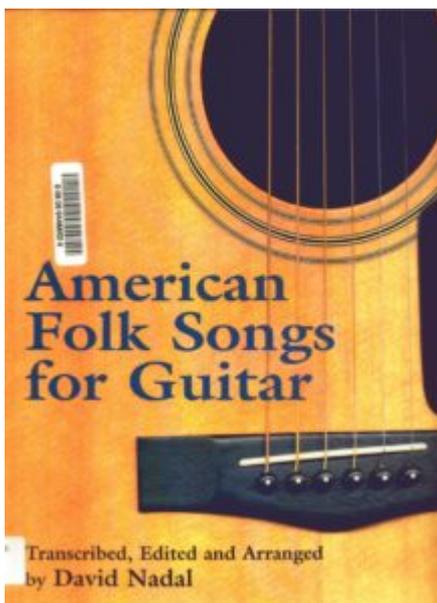
As the political tide in the United States turned conservative and then reactionary during the 1950s, Guthrie and his folksinger friends in New York kept alive the flame of activist music making. He continued writing and performing politically charged songs that inspired the American folk revival of the 1960s, at the head of which were performers such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Phil Ochs, who came to pay homage to Guthrie in his hospital room in New Jersey, to which he was confined beginning in 1954, after his increasingly erratic actions were finally and correctly diagnosed as the result of Huntington's disease.

Among the more than 1,000 songs that Guthrie wrote were a number of remarkable children's songs written in the language and from the perspective of childhood, as well as some of the most lasting and influential songs in the canon of American music, not least "So Long (It's Been Good to Know Yuh)", "Hard Traveling," "Blowing Down This Old Dusty Road," "Union Maid," and (inspired by John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*) "Tom Joad ." Probably the most famous of his works is "This Land Is Your Land," which became a pillar of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

At the time of his death in 1967, Guthrie had already begun to assume legendary stature as a folk figure, and his influence on such pivotal singer-songwriters as Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen was immense. A film version of his book *Bound for*

Glory appeared in 1976, and in 1998 Billy Bragg and alternative rockers Wilco released the critically acclaimed Mermaid Avenue , a collection of previously unrecorded lyrics by Guthrie that they had set to music; Mermaid Avenue Vol. II followed in 2000.

Woody Guthrie // [Woodys Greatest Hits](#): My Dusty Road LP (FULL ALBUM)



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Tracklist

A1	This Land Is Your Land	2:44
A2	Going Down The Road (I Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way)	2:56
A3	Talking Sailor	3:06
A4	Philadelphia Lawyer	2:32
A5	Hard Travellin'	2:38
A6	Jesus Christ	2:41

A7	The Sinking Of The Reuben JamesWritten-By – Pete Seeger , Almahttps://sheetmusiclibrary.website/2021/07/30/woody-guthrie-sheet-music/nac Singers* , Woody Guthrie	
3:25		
B1	Pretty Boy Floyd	3:06
B2	Grand Coulee Dam	2:09
B3	Nine Hundred Miles	2:51
B4	Going Down The Road (I Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way)	2:57
B5	My Daddy (Flies A Ship In The Sky)	2:33
B6	Bad Repetation	2:50