

Woody Guthrie

1912-1967



Woody Guthrie was America's folk singer. He grew up in rural Oklahoma and traveled with migrant workers through America during the Great Dust Bowl. Woody worked as a singer and a song writer, as well as a radio DJ. He hosted several radio shows where he discussed politics and sang his songs. Woody's politics always leaned toward Communism. He devoted his music to declaring the hardships of the life of the common worker. Woody Guthrie's most famous song was "This Land is Your Land." It was new lyrics written to an old country hymn. Woody was annoyed by the popularity of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" and wanted to write a song critical of America. Guthrie's original verses included lines criticizing powerful Americans for controlling the country. This song has been edited and taught to countless American children as a patriotic song.

Woody recorded a huge number of songs and conversations which are all part of the Library of Congress. His famous music recordings were made in a series of interviews with the famous radioman, Alan Lomax. His songs have been released in nearly three dozen albums over the years.

Woody Guthrie became great friends with the other folk singers of the age, and became a respected leader in their politics. His friendship with Pete Seeger and Leadbelly were major influences in his life.



He spent much of his life travelling across the US, singing and writing about the common worker. He made his major recordings in Los Angeles, CA, and Greenwich Village, NY. Bob Dylan was heavily influenced by the work of Woody Guthrie and became a frequent visitor during Woody's last days fighting with Huntington's disease until his death in 1967.

Woody had 8 children, two became musicians as well. His son Arlo, most famous for his folk song "Alice's Restaurant" is still a successful performing musician to this day.