



Right, from top: Seeger, Bob Dylan, Judy Collins and Arlo Guthrie (from left) at the Woody Guthrie Memorial Concert at Carnegie Hall, 1967; filming "Wasn't That a Time?," a movie of the Weavers' 1980 reunion; Seeger with banjo; at Red

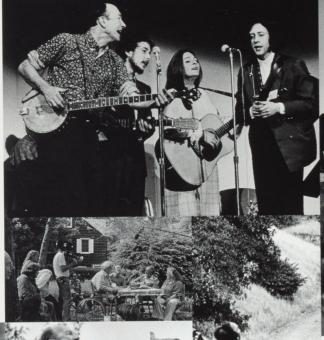
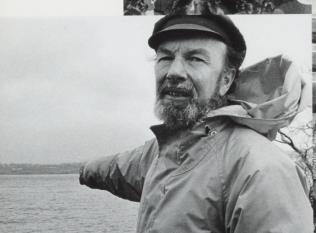






photo of Seeger sporting a skimmer (above). Above: The
Weavers in the
early '50s –
Seeger, Lee
Hays, Ronnie
Gilbert and Fred
Hellerman (from
left). Left: Seeger
singing on a
hillside in El
Cerrito, Calif., in
the early '60s.







Above: The Almanac Singers in 1941, with Woody Guthrie on the far left, and Seeger playing banjo. Left: Seeger with his mother, the late Constance Seeger. In spite of his success with audiences, I think Pete is shy by nature, though he speaks easily to multitudes. Descended from the *Mayflower* Pilgrims, Pete has been a

made with the Weavers – Ronnie Gilbert, Fred Hellerman and Lee Hays – swept into listeners' hearts with rhythmic, sweet guitars; banjo; clapping hands; and rainbow lyrics: "Kumbaya," "Goodnight, Irene," "If I Had a Hammer," "On Top of Old Smokey," "Michael

floor behind the couch in the New York offices of Harold Leventhal, our mutual manager. Pete was fast asleep, banjo case by his side, sweater under his head. Harold also managed Woody Guthrie – who in 1988 preceded Pete into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an early influas ever, while a retinue of his friends performed "Turn Turn Turn," "Golden Thread" and "If I Had a Hammer." President Clinton spoke of Pete's being an "inconvenient artist" who was attacked for his beliefs, though he was now wearing those attacks as badges of honor.



performer and recording artist for six decades. During some of those years, he was hounded by Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the House **Un-American Activities** Committee for his political leanings, banned from performing on national television and shut out from the commercial recordbuying audience. Still, Pete's music broke through the darkness of the Depression years in America, the war-torn '40s and the silent '50s. Pete has transcended every trouble to become a voice of the people, a prophet of the times past and the times to come, praised by artists and audiences around the world.

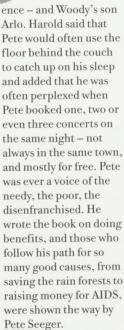
Born in New York City in 1919, Pete Seeger learned well about his American musical heritage from his father, a musicologist, and his mother, a violin teacher. His early interest in folk music was encouraged by the great musical archivist Alan Lomax. Seeger crossed the country by rail and thumb, went to Harvard and served in the Army in World War II. He sang with Woody Guthrie in the 1940s and formed the Weavers, one of the most extraordinary and successful musical ensembles of its era.

The music that Pete

(Row the Boat Ashore)."
Around the world, the
Weavers' music lifted the
spirits of men and women,
whether they were at
concerts in small towns
and big cities, on picket
lines, college campuses,
in sweatshops or union
meetings. The Weavers
sang songs that quieted
the beast separating us
from our fellows.

My first memory of Pete is the sound of that riveting, enchanting voice on a recording I dug out of the vinyl racks of the Denver Folklore Center. I was in high school, learning the guitar, rebelling and searching for meaning, and I still remember the young faces in the bright-colored photograph on the cover -Lee, Freddy and Ronnie; Pete with his head thrown back, eyes closed. So young, so passionate, all of them singing of peace, singing of strength and courage. Their music was a hammerblow to the fear and the paralysis of the '50s, a counterpoint to the shadow of McCarthy on the walls of our halls and our hearts. In that darkness, Pete and the Weavers were seekers of truth, sojourners in music and life. In them we found music that could lift us up, and we set it onto our own powerful shoulders.

My next memory of the tall, shy visionary was seeing him in 1964, stretched out on the



"What a surprise!"
Pete is probably thinking tonight. A folk singer (Pete actually doesn't like to be referred to as a folk singer) being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, joining the company of Chuck Berry, Bob Dylan, LaVern Baker, the Byrds and the Rolling Stones!

Rolling Stones!
But why not? Many
honors have been given to
the man who set
everything in motion,
who taught us all to sing.
In 1995 the National
Endowment for the Arts'
National Medal of Arts
was presented to Pete at
the Kennedy Center, in
Washington, D.C. The
Pied Piper's once lightbrown hair, now iron gray,
shone above his blue eyes,
as piercing and passionate

Washington's elite cheered as Pete accepted his honor, smiling gently. As I watched the tape of that celebration with Harold Leventhal, I thought I saw the glimmer of tears in Pete's eyes. I know there were tears in Harold's and in my own.

For the past 20 years, Pete has toured with Woody Guthrie's son Arlo, and from his sloop, the Clearwater, Pete has fought, with great success, for the cleansing of the Hudson River. Able to retire covered in glory, Pete keeps going, singing out and speaking out all over this world. Pete's music is and always was the promise of what we are all longing to be a part of, even as we are individuals.

It has been a long road, filled with struggle, but Pete has taught us so much in the medium of song, the language of the heart. In his footsteps many walk, many run, many write and sing. But there is only one Pete Seeger, the man whose incredible life demonstrates that one person can make a difference, there is a time to be alone, a time to weep, a time to dance, a time to gather stones together that there is a purpose to every life and a time to every purpose under -Judy Collins heaven.

