Edgy American Folk Music: Political Protest from Guthrie and Seeger to Early Bob Dylan (and Beyond)

ANTHRO 19
FALL 2017
W 11-11:50A
Haines 310
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Textbooks:

Woody Guthrie: Writing America’s Songs [WG]

“To Everything There is a Season”: Pete Seeger and the Power of Song. [PS]
by Allan M. Winkler. New York: Oxford UP. (Required)

And other readings as listed below, to be posted to the course website:
https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/17F-ANTHRO19-4

The Topic: Examination of the emerging tradition combining folk music and social protest with emphasis on the period from 1940-1970. Woody Guthrie is viewed as a key figure in development of a singer/songwriter folk music tradition and one of the leaders who helped build a vernacular musical tradition of social critique, political protest, and social change. Though best remembered for such songs as “This Land is Your Land”, his body of work includes many songs that dealt with issues of social inequality, political domination, and general social injustice. The course examines aspects of his life, music, and politics and traces his influence and the elaboration of this tradition among his followers. These include especially Pete Seeger and early protest songs by Bob Dylan. Some attention will be additionally be paid to more recent efforts to continue this tradition by such musicians as Peter, Paul, and Mary, Bruce Springsteen, Billy Bragg, Ani DiFranco, Levon Helm, and Tom Morello. The class will consider the mutual influences of politics and music from 1940 to 2017.

Each class will feature songs and/or videos. Recorded music will be by Woody Guthrie; Pete Seeger; Bob Dylan; Peter, Paul, and Mary; Bruce Springsteen; Billy Bragg and Wilco; Tom Morello; and Ani DiFranco.

Meetings:

#1 October 4: Introduction, Introductions

Introduction of Topics, of Class Members

History of the Folk Music Revival in America, pp. 17-35. NYC: Continuum.

Browse (at your leisure)
http://www.woodyguthrie.org/
http://woodyguthrie.org/archives/archivesindex.htm

#2 October 11: Music, Morality, and Social Change/Woody Guthrie


Optional: Woody Guthrie, Bound for Glory, (selected chapters)

#3 October 18: Woody Guthrie, post war-years, rediscovery, and death

Read: WG Ch. 2, pp. 31-52 (optional) and Ch.3, 53-71.

#4 October 25 Woody Guthrie—the Legacy

Read: WG Ch. 4, pp. 73-101. (skim)
Video: Woody Guthrie: this Machine Kills Fascists. (selections).

#5 November 1: Pete Seeger: Developing the Tradition

2007. Weinstein Co. (selections)

#6 November 8: Pete Seeger and Social Critique

Read: To Everything There is a Season: Pete Seeger and the Power of Song. Ch. 1. Talking Union, 11-36; Ch. 3. Where Have All the Flowers Gone?, 64-87; Ch. 4 We Shall Overcome, 88-112.


#7 November 15: Folk Songs, Social Movements, Early Bob Dylan
(read 2 of the following three)


To Everything There is a Season: Pete Seeger and the Power of Song [PS]. Ch. 5. “Waist Deep in the Big Muddy”, 113-138.

#8 November 22: Bob Dylan: from Protest to Transformation


#9 November 29  Bob Dylan’s Folk Sojourn


#10 December 6  Transformations in the 1970’s and Later Repercussions

Read: (Choose any two of the following three)


To Everything There is a Season: Pete Seeger and the Power of Song. Ch. 6. “Sailing Down My Golden River”, 139-166.


For this week, also please make your own suggestions for musicians who are continuing this tradition, broadly understood, in one form or another. See me or email me any suggestions you may have along with specific songs that might be played that are good examples of the way this tradition has continued and transformed.
Grading: Grading is obligatorily P/NP. There are no written assignments. Students earn passing grades by 1) attending seminar meetings (and missing no more than two meetings) and 2) by engaging in full and informed participation in the discussion of readings. For students who do not participate in seminar discussion on a regular basis, written reviews of the assigned articles will be required to earn a passing grade. Also the second permitted absence must be accompanied by a 1-2 page review of the work assigned for discussion that week. No more than two absences are normally permitted.

Use the course website to access all readings other than PS.

Read what you can, have fun, attend, talk, react, and suggest.

All the best,

Paul Kroskrity