

# Sing It: A Biography of Pete Seeger, the American Folk Legend



## Sing It!: A Biography of Pete Seeger by Muriel Harris Weinstein

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Word Wise : Enabled  
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Pete Seeger, an American folk singer and activist, is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in American music history. His songs, filled with a deep sense of social justice and environmentalism, have inspired generations of musicians and activists alike.

*Sing It: A Biography of Pete Seeger*, a comprehensive and captivating account of Seeger's life and work, provides readers with a fascinating glimpse into the world of this American icon. Through extensive research, interviews with Seeger's family and friends, and a wealth of archival materials, author David Dunaway paints a vivid portrait of a man whose music and activism left an enduring mark on the American landscape.

## **Early Life and Musical Beginnings**

Pete Seeger was born in New York City in 1919. His father, Charles Seeger, was a musicologist, composer, and music educator. His mother, Constance de Clyver Seeger, was a concert violinist who encouraged her children to pursue their musical interests.

As a young man, Seeger developed a deep love for folk music. Growing up in the 1930s, he was exposed to the sounds of rural America through the popular radio broadcasts of the Grand Ole Opry. He also drew inspiration from the music of Woody Guthrie, a folk singer who wrote songs about the struggles of working people.

In 1940, Seeger formed the Almanac Singers, a folk group that sang songs about current events, social justice, and labor rights. The Almanac Singers quickly gained popularity, performing at rallies and union meetings across the country.

## **The Weavers and the Post-War Years**

After the Second World War, Seeger and several other members of the Almanac Singers formed the Weavers, a folk quartet that achieved widespread success in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Weavers' repertoire included traditional folk songs, spirituals, and new compositions by Seeger and other members of the group.

Their recordings, such as "Tzena, Tzena," "Goodnight, Irene," and "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine," became huge hits on the pop charts. The Weavers also appeared on television and radio shows, introducing folk music to a wider audience.

## **Blacklisting and Activism**

In the early 1950s, Seeger's career was threatened by the McCarthy era's anti-communist witch hunt. In 1955, he was called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which accused him of being a member of the Communist Party.

Seeger refused to answer questions about his political beliefs, citing his First Amendment rights. He was subsequently blacklisted by the entertainment industry and denied work for several years.

During this period, Seeger continued to write and perform songs about social justice. He also became involved in various activism movements, including the civil rights movement and the anti-nuclear movement.

## **The 1960s and Beyond**

In the 1960s, Seeger's music and activism reached new heights. He played a key role in the folk music revival of the era, performing at events such as

the Newport Folk Festival and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Seeger's songs, such as "We Shall Overcome" and "Turn! Turn! Turn!," became anthems of the civil rights movement. He also wrote and recorded songs about the Vietnam War, poverty, and environmental issues.

In the years after the 1960s, Seeger continued to perform and record music, as well as write books and articles about folk music and social justice. He became a mentor to younger musicians, such as Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen, and his influence on American culture continued to grow.

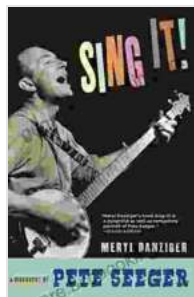
## **Legacy and Impact**

Pete Seeger died in 2014 at the age of 94. He left behind a vast legacy of music, activism, and environmentalism. His songs have been recorded by countless artists and continue to inspire people around the world.

Seeger's life and work are a testament to the power of music to bring about social change. His activism and environmentalism also demonstrate the importance of using one's voice to make the world a more just and equitable place.

*Sing It: A Biography of Pete Seeger* is a definitive and captivating account of the life and legacy of one of America's greatest folk singers and activists. Through its detailed research, engaging writing, and abundance of archival materials, this biography provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of Seeger's music, activism, and enduring impact on American culture.

Whether you are a longtime fan of Pete Seeger or simply interested in learning more about the folk music revival of the 20th century, this book is a must-read. *Sing It* is an inspiring and unforgettable portrait of a man who dedicated his life to making the world a better place.



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