

On February 23, 1940, the world is at war.

Nations are in the midst of a global economic meltdown, Hitler has been slaughtering millions of people, and influenza is killing millions more. The midwest of America has been crippled by climactic changes that make “global warming” seem like a bad breeze, displacing hundreds of thousands of families into California for jobs promised but never realized.

Meanwhile, a troubled songwriter hitchhikes across America trying to make his way home ... and on a dangerously cold, lonely day in Pennsylvania he began writing one of the greatest songs of the 20th century.

This is an opera about the day Woody Guthrie wrote “This Land Is Your Land.”

Photos by Larry Steur

Written, Arranged & Produced by
Michael Johnathon

Music Director and Conductor
Dr. Jo Nardolillo

Orchestral Arrangements and Score
Michael Johnathon & Jo Nardolillo

For additional copies of this CD
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www.WoodyGuthrieOpera.com
www.MichaelJohnathon.com
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1 Overture - Pennsylvania Road 3:54

2 Ramblin' Man 4:34

3 Nobody Knows 2:02

4 Believe 2:56


5 Marjorie's Song 3:26

bonus tracks

6 How Can I Keep from Singing (live) 3:32

7 Pachelbel's Canon (live) 4:04

8 Believe (live) 3:25



Woody

For the People

A TRADITIONAL OPERA
with Symphony Orchestra

The day Woody Guthrie wrote
This Land Is Your Land

1 Overture / Pennsylvania Road

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The opera opens with Woody alone on a roadside in the snow and cold of winter. In 1939 Woody was crossing America after working for a month at the Bonneville Power Administration in Oregon, writing a batch of songs to be used in a documentary about the Grand Cooley dam. After visiting his wife Mary in Texas, he was on his way back to NYC when he got stranded in Pennsylvania. Cold, tired, broke and nearly frozen to death in a snowstorm, Woody's life was literally saved by the kindness of a ranger.

2 Ramblin' Man

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Woody was as famous for riding the rails as he was for his songs. Here he meets up with fellow hobos and out-of-work travelers who encourage him to press on and keep singing as he makes his way home.

3 Nobody Knows

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Woody is found nearly frozen to death by a Pennsylvania ranger and finally **Pete Seeger**. The ranger brings them to a cafe to warm up and have some coffee. At the cafe they meet the great **Paul Robeson**. In real life, the three were in fact friends and this song was one of the famous Robeson melodies.

4 Believe

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In the cafe, the radio plays the Kate Smith recording of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America" and Woody is, as he was in real life, incensed over the song's syrupy approach to what was happening around him. They contrast the "make believe" images of the Berlin song with what they actually believe, and this is Woody's response.

5 Marjorie's Song

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In the final moments of Act One, the ranger and **Paul** goes home to their wives. **Pete** heads back to New York to be with his wife **Toshi** ... but Woody has no one, except possibly his growing affection for the new lady in his life, a New York dancer named **Marjorie**. She later became mother to some of Woody's children, including Arlo.



Bonus concert tracks by the composer; planned to be part of the completed opera

6 Pachelbel's Canon in D

(Trad/Johann Pachelbel)

Michael Johnathon - guitar
Jo Nardolillo - lead viola
Steve Rankin - violin
Geoffrey Hershberger - cello

7 How Can I Keep from Singing

(trad/arr. and adapted by Michael Johnathon)

Michael Johnathon - banjo and vocal
University of Kentucky Niles String Quartet

8 Believe

(Michael Johnathon as noted)

Michael Johnathon - guitar and vocal
Jo Nardolillo - first violin Bob Bryant - bass



Tracks 6,7 and 8 are from Michael Johnathon's *Front Porch* album on PoetMan Records USA. For details visit www.MichaelJohnathon.com



"Any fool can make something complicated.
It takes a genius to make it simple."

Woody Guthrie

"Woody: For the People" Opera Sampler
34-piece symphony orchestra and 6 award
winning opera singers recorded five arias from
act one of "Woody: For the People"

The Voices:

Woody Guthrie - Nicholas Provenzale

Pete Seeger - Gregory Turay

Paul Robeson - Reginald Smith, Jr.

Policeman - Jason Brown

Hobos - Dennis Bender, Manual Castillo

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in Lexington, KY www.RMAVstudios.com

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