

Mike Seeger: A Folk Revival Legend and Pioneer of American Roots Music



Mike Seeger (1933-2009) was an American folk musician, singer, songwriter, and folklorist who played a significant role in the American folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s. He was a multi-instrumentalist known for his virtuosity on the banjo, guitar, fiddle, and autoharp. Seeger was also a dedicated collector and performer of traditional American folk songs, and he helped to preserve and popularize this music through his recordings, concerts, and workshops.



Music from the True Vine: Mike Seeger's Life and Musical Journey by Bill C. Malone

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 252 pages
Screen Reader : Supported



Early Life and Influences

Mike Seeger was born in New York City in 1933 to Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger, both prominent folk musicians and music educators. His father was a noted musicologist and composer, and his mother was a folk singer and teacher. From a young age, Mike was immersed in folk music and surrounded by some of the leading figures in the folk revival movement, including Pete Seeger (his older half-brother), Woody Guthrie, and Alan Lomax.

Seeger's early musical influences included the traditional folk music of the Appalachian Mountains, bluegrass, and old-time music. He began playing the banjo at the age of 12 and quickly developed a reputation for his exceptional talent. By the time he was a teenager, he was performing regularly at folk festivals and concerts alongside his brother, Pete.

The Weavers and the Folk Revival

In the early 1950s, Mike Seeger joined the legendary folk group the Weavers, which also included Pete Seeger, Lee Hays, and Ronnie Gilbert. The Weavers were one of the most popular and influential folk groups of the era, and their recordings and performances helped to popularize American folk music to a wide audience.

With the Weavers, Mike Seeger played the banjo and sang harmony vocals. He also contributed several songs to the group's repertoire, including "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" and "Midnight Special." The Weavers disbanded in 1953, but they reunited several times over the years.

After leaving the Weavers, Mike Seeger continued to perform and record as a solo artist. He also worked extensively as a folklorist, collecting and documenting traditional folk songs and music. He recorded numerous albums of traditional folk music, including "Folk Songs of the Blue Ridge Mountains" (1958) and "American Folk Songs for Children" (1963).

Later Career and Legacy

In the 1960s and 1970s, Mike Seeger continued to be a leading figure in the folk music community. He taught workshops, performed at festivals and concerts, and recorded several more albums. In 1979, he received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in recognition of his contributions to American folk music.

In his later years, Seeger focused increasingly on preserving and teaching traditional folk music. He established the Mike Seeger Archives at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which houses a vast collection

of his recordings, manuscripts, and other materials. He also continued to perform and record until his death in 2009.

Mike Seeger's legacy as a folk musician and folklorist is immense. He was a master musician who played a key role in the American folk revival and helped to preserve and popularize traditional American folk music. His recordings, concerts, and workshops have inspired generations of musicians and listeners alike.

Musical Style and Influences

Mike Seeger was a versatile musician who mastered a wide range of traditional American folk instruments. He was particularly known for his innovative and virtuosic banjo playing. He developed a unique style that incorporated elements of bluegrass, old-time music, and jazz.

Seeger was also a gifted singer and songwriter. He wrote numerous original songs, many of which have become folk classics. His songs often reflected his deep love of his homeland and its people.

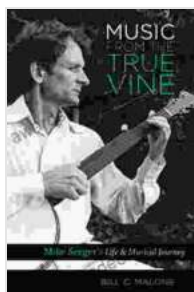
Seeger's music was influenced by a wide range of sources, including traditional folk music, bluegrass, old-time music, and jazz. He was also influenced by the music of his brother, Pete Seeger, and other folk revivalists.

Personal Life and Family

Mike Seeger married twice. His first marriage was to the folk singer Carolyn Hester. They had one child, a daughter named Celia. His second marriage was to the folk singer Alison McMordie. They had two children, a son named Mark and a daughter named Maggie.

Seeger was a devoted family man and a passionate advocate for folk music. He was also a dedicated environmentalist and social activist. He died in 2009 at the age of 75.

Mike Seeger was a towering figure in American folk music. He was a master musician, a gifted singer and songwriter, and a dedicated folklorist. His work helped to preserve and popularize traditional American folk music and inspired generations of musicians and listeners alike. His legacy continues to live on through his recordings, concerts, and workshops.



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