

Occupied Beats

Bob Dylan, like Woody Guthrie has spent his life creating music that surpasses the test of time. Both artists share a deep empathy for those in society who have been discarded.

Guthrie began singing songs with a desire to tell stories in a form that would be remembered, heard, and passed on. In Guthrie's biography *Bound For Glory*, he depicts the way in which folk music greatly exceeds other forms of art. He writes:

with a song, you sing it out, and it soaks in people's ears and they all jump up and down and sing it with you, and then when you quit singing it, it's gone, and you get a job singing it again. On top of that you can sing out what you think. You can tell tales of all kinds to put your ideas across to the other fellow.

Similar to Guthrie, Dylan is an artist, who over the years has displayed an impeccable ability to capture his listeners. Although he has repeatedly changed his musical style, his foundation as a storyteller has never altered. His lyrics "soak in people's ears" and his political messages have always shaken the movers.

Dylan remembers being transfixed the first time he heard Woody Guthrie's voice and likewise, many people remember the exact moment that they first hear Dylan's unforgettable, yet indescribable voice. Greil Marcus recalls a friend comparing that first moment to that of hearing the news of Kennedy's assassination. He goes on to admit that the reason he analyzes Dylan's influence on American culture is because, "the first time" he "heard Bob Dylan's voice," as is the case for many others, "was only the first first time." Dylan always viewed Guthrie as an iconic figure to be remembered, and admits

that in the beginning of his career he, “was head over heels in singing nothing but Guthrie songs.” In *Chronicles* he writes, “A lot of folks might have thought of Woody’s songs as backdated, but not me. I felt they were totally in the moment, current and even forecasted things to come.” Dylan and Guthrie were both artists of liberation.

Both men wrote songs that made their audiences question what was going on in the world around them. Their messages encourage people to act as leading players rather than merely “pawns” in the game of life. As Dylan states, “Woody’s got a fierce poetic soul – the poet of hard crust sod and gumbo mud. Guthrie divides the world between those who work and those who don’t and is interested in the liberation of the human race and wants to create a world worth living in.” If Guthrie were alive to witness Dylan’s change and growth as an artist, there is no doubt he would say the same about Bob.

Following Guthrie’s footsteps, Dylan writes songs of despair that might seem negative to the uninformed listener, but in reality display great concern for the oppressed, and address issues that have been overlooked and work toward making positive world changes. Join us tonight in our attempt to bring back the heart and soul of occupied beats with music inspired by the legendary Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan.