

'A great tribute with a lot of respect'

Woody Guthrie: Return of the Dust Bowl Poet

By John Grissim

SAN FRANCISCO — Long before he died of Huntington's disease in 1967 at age 55, Woody Guthrie had been acknowledged as one of America's greatest composers of folk songs as well as a prolific prose writer whose books and articles powerfully captured the Dust Bowl Thirties. Yet with the exception of the folkies, post-war generations have been largely unaware of his life and legacy. All that may change soon as the result of the rerelease of many of his works, but especially with the release of *Bound for Glory*, a \$7-million film based on Guthrie's autobiography and starring David Carradine.

Fresh on the market these days are new printings of *Bound for*



Glory, The Woody Guthrie Songbook, a reissue of *Woody Sez*, as well as the hardcover of *Seeds of Man*, a lengthy autobiographical novel completed 28 years ago and published for the first time this fall.

The list of recently released recordings is just as extensive. The movie soundtrack features David Carradine singing Woody Guthrie. Warner Bros. is releasing *Woody Guthrie Sings*, a compilation of tracks cut in the late Forties. Warners is also releasing *Tribute to Woody Guthrie*, a double LP set culled from two concerts (in New York in 1968 and Los Angeles in 1970) featuring Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Arlo Guthrie and Odetta. Also, RCA is reissuing Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads* (recorded in 1940) while Cream Records (in cooperation with Woody Guthrie Publications) has released *Woody Guthrie—We Ain't Down Yet*, an album of Guthrie songs.

If all the above escapes your notice, you can look for a one-hour PBS special, *Woody Guthrie's America*, a retrospective narrated by Studs Terkel and sung by Pete Seeger, Fred Hellerman (of the Weavers), Judy Collins and Arlo Guthrie.

The film of *Bound for Glory* is a carefully crafted, richly detailed evocation of the Thirties, a time during which Guthrie bolted from his dust-choked home in Pampa, Texas (leaving behind his wife and two children), and head-

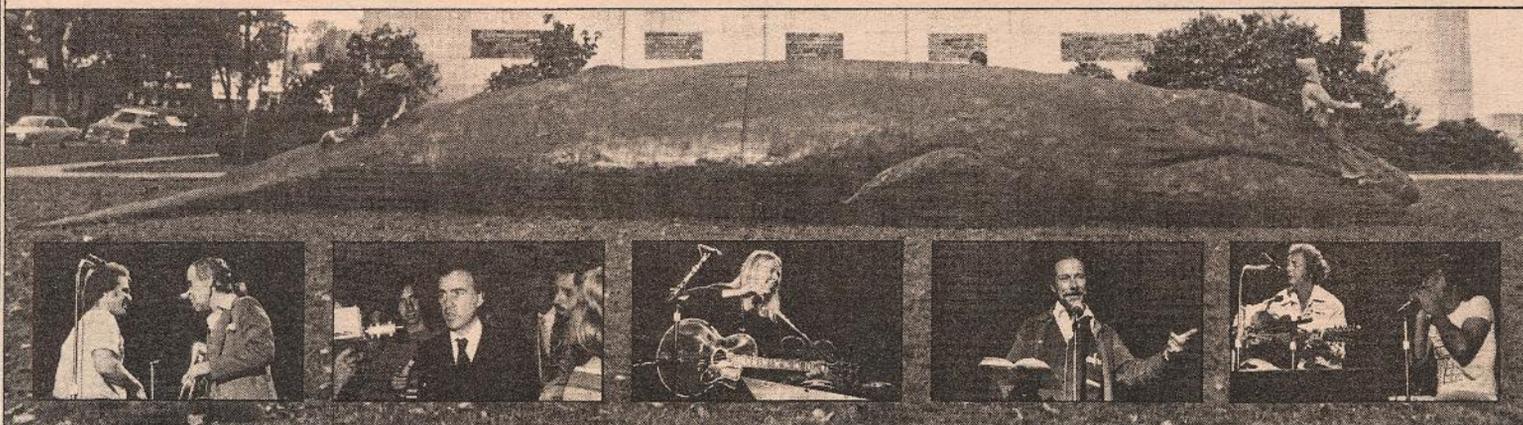


David Carradine (r) in 'Bound for Glory'

ed for California, spending a lot of time in hobo jungles, migrant labor camps and traveling by thumb and "sidecar Pullman" in between. The film is long (just under two and a half hours) and lavish (production costs went nearly \$2 million over budget) but tastefully executed and technically nearly flawless. Director Hal Ashby (*The Last Detail*, *Shampoo*) shot more than 160 hours of film while photography director Haskell Wexler's use of a subtle, washed-out color effect

creates an authentic old-timey atmosphere.

What does the Guthrie family think of Woody's screen portrayal? Mary Guthrie, Woody's first wife, has seen the movie and "loved it. They did a beautiful job. I spent a lot of time on the set and I saw David living the part." Said Guthrie's second wife, Marjorie: "It's a great tribute to Woody and done with a lot of respect. I really loved it. Considering what Hollywood might have done—like [Cont. on 20]



Celebrating the whale, California-style: (top) whale sculpture by Larry Foster; (l to r) Country Joe and friend, Governor Jerry Brown, Joni Mitchell, poet Gary Snyder, Fred Neil with John Sebastian

By Monica Bay

A Whale of a Benefit Concert

SACRAMENTO — What Bob Dylan did for Hurricane Carter with the Rolling Thunder Revue, Fred Neil and John Sebastian are trying to do for whales with their Rolling Coconut Revue.

Sebastian and Neil are both members of the Dolphin Project, designed to aid research on dolphins and communications (other prominent musicians in the organization include Joni Mitchell, Stephen Stills, David Crosby, Rick Danko and Richie Havens).

The Rolling Coconut Revue, along with Joni Mitchell, Country Joe McDonald, the Paul Win-

ter Consort and poet Gary Snyder, appeared November 20th at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium, at the invitation of California governor Jerry Brown. The music was the climax of a day-long event, *California Celebrates the Whale*, designed to bring international attention to the plight of whales, which face extinction due to continued commercial hunting by Japan and Russia.

Governor Brown had personally invited Joni Mitchell, and after her appearance was announced November 16th, it took only two days for the show's 4500 tickets (at \$4 apiece) to sell out.

After a morning and afternoon of displays and films, the lights dimmed in the auditorium at 4:30 p.m. for the evening's activities. But it took another two hours of speeches and films before the Paul Winter Consort opened the musical segment. They played in total darkness, asking the audience to pretend to be a whale swimming in the depths of the ocean.

Then came poet Gary Snyder with one poem about whales and another about eating, which had the audience somewhat bemused until John Sebastian appeared onstage, bringing the event down

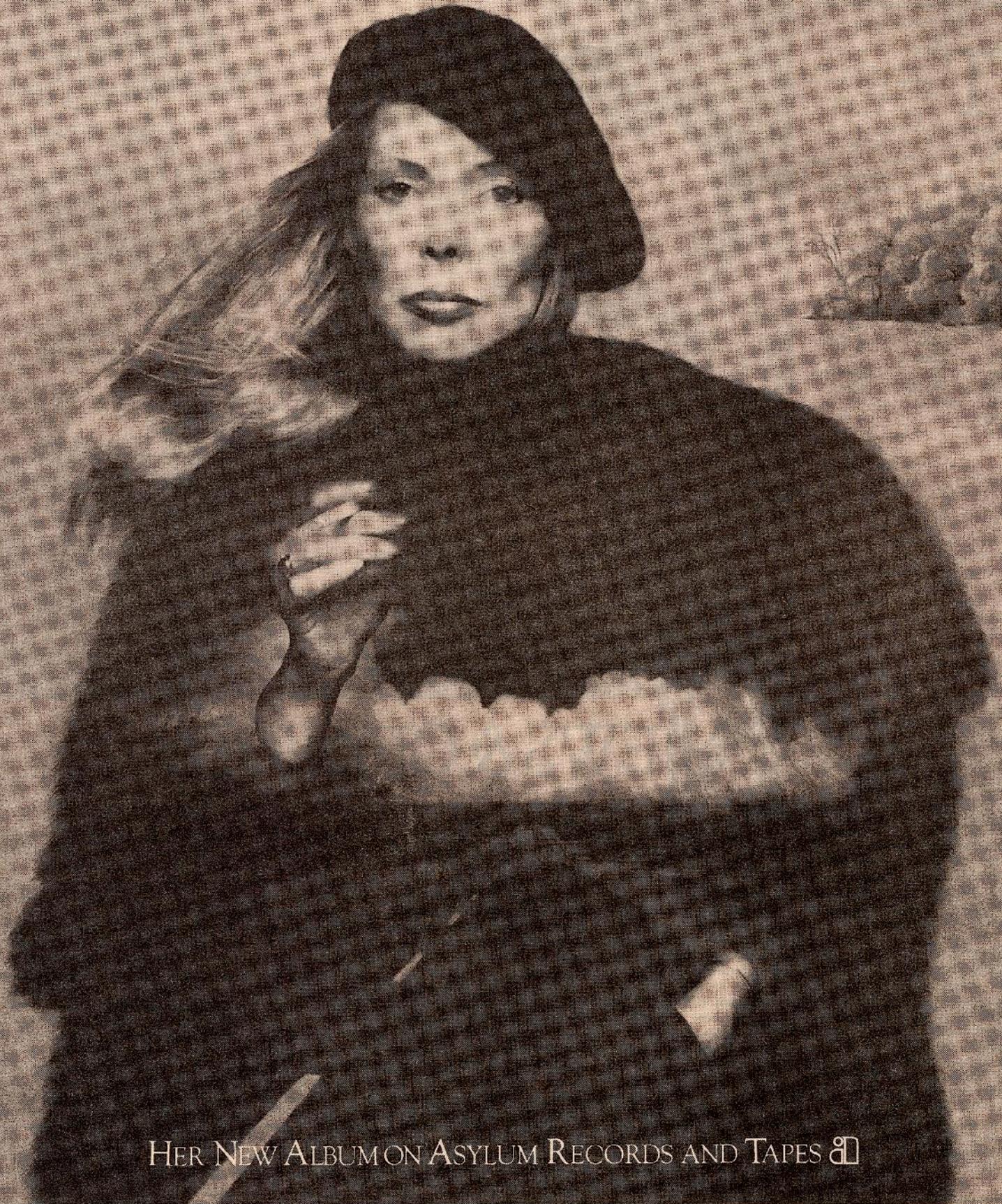
to earth with his latest hit, "Welcome Back." He went from the TV series theme song to a medley of old Lovin' Spoonful hits and was finally joined by Fred Neil, who sang "The Dolphins," "Everybody's Talkin'" and "Candy Man," accompanied by members of the Rolling Coconut Revue.

After the revue left the stage, on came Country Joe McDonald, who received a mixed reception from the crowd with his rubber-mask Nixon flashing a peace sign and his revised Fish cheer ("W-H-A-L-E-S"). Said one concertgoer, "Country Joe still thinks we're in Vietnam." It was

after 1 a.m. when Mitchell finally took the stage, complaining about the late hour. She looked exhausted and performed a brief, distracted set of "Coyote" and "Furry Sings the Blues" off her recent *Hejira* album, also singing "Edith and the Kingpin" and "Shadows and Light" off her *Hissing of Summer Lawns* album and her earlier "Jericho." She returned for an encore of "Song for Sharon" off the new album.

It was nearly 2 a.m. when the concert ended. But most seemed exhilarated, agreeing with John Sebastian, who said, "This has been a very emotional day. There's a very real possibility that there will be no whales for our children, and for their children." 🎵

JONI MITCHELL HEJIRA



HER NEW ALBUM ON ASYLUM RECORDS AND TAPES 