

Newport Folk Festival Music Aimed To Bring Out The Good In People

The music was blues, rock, country western, gospel and soul; the place was the Newport Folk Festival, where, from last Wednesday through Sunday, crowds of enthusiastic old and young people gathered to hear the voice of the folk—the racers of the past, the precursors of the present, the visionaries of the future. Spirits were never dampened by intermittent rain.

The atmosphere was casual as groups of young men and women, dressed in bell-bottoms, bolero shirts—in their own thing—sprawled out over the festival grounds, improvising on guitar and harmonica, kazoo and juke's harp, or clapping and singing in accompaniment to the Festival performers.

Peace and Freedom

And the songs the performers sang, the songs the groups of young men and women sang—their theme was black liberation, freedom, and above all, peace. Putting it in a nutshell for all the performers and audience, veteran folk singer Pete Seeger said, "If music could only bring peace, it's only a musician."

During the week, concerts and special events filled the hours with festive entertainment. A children's day with singing, dancing, puppets, and other activities, a small concert and dance, and a hostessy entertainment—the early-comers, Friday night's concert featured such greats as Big Mama Thornton, Muddy Waters Blues Band and Taj Mahal.

We arrived in time for the Saturday afternoon workshop, and attended the Saturday evening concert and Sunday morning gospel concert.

Two Workshops

Two workshops, expressions of the spirit of the times—Black Roots and Songs of Liberation—drew the largest crowds and tumultuous applause. Black Roots, which traced Black music from haunting African melodies to the limbo beat of the British West Indies to American blues and rock, featured such groups as Muddy Waters Blues Band, Jean-Benois Mwendu, Big Mama Thornton, and the Key West Jununno Band. The host grew faster and louder as the concert progressed, and the crowd exploded into ecstatic clapping and dancing in the aisles.

Songs of Liberation workshop was the rich, sonorous folk sound of protest, the light flowery arias of peace and hope. Peter Seeger, long a paragon of the American protest movement, spoke to the crowd with two favorites, "Children of the Sun" and "Letter to Eve." He left his group of delighted supporters with his simple formula for peace and a better world—"I think we need to bring out the good in people."

Writes Own Songs

Len Chandler, a young black folk singer who trained in classical music, writes his own songs from newspaper clippings and the events of today. Mocking the President, Chandler drew loud applause saying, "I often wonder when Nixon is sitting in a room alone if anybody's there." He likes participatory songs—"there are too many spectator sports," he said—so the crowds joined in on many of his songs. A happy air with rounds, "Run Come See the Sun" was his closing song and his concert ended on a note of hope.

Songs of Liberation workshop closed with the Rev. Frederick Douglass Kirkpatrick, and his brother, the Rev. J. L. Kirkpatrick, black spiritual leaders who preach the healing of wounds, between black and white with songs. A powerfully expressive slave song, "Idea Sus," Mr. F. D. Kirkpatrick ex- "Idea Sus" was the first slave ship — climaxed by his sermon for everyone.

Spirit of Bob Dylan

Saturday evening's concert was the spirit of Bob Dylan—country folk—and the spirit was ecumenical and of today. It featured the moving, spiritual reli-



"BURN, BABY, BURN" — The cries for black freedom and liberation are the sounds of today and the songs of the Rev. Frederick Douglass Kirkpatrick (right) and his brother, the Rev. J. L. Kirkpatrick (left) at the Newport Folk Festival. The two folk singers

performers included Joni Mitchell, New Lost City Ramblers, the Everly Brothers and their father, Ike Everly, and Arlo Guthrie.

The New Lost City Ramblers opened the concert with a sprightly old time dancer's tune "Old Joe Clark." Their hoedown, country western beat set the rhythm for many of the evening's performers.

The Everly Brothers were enthusiastically received by the crowds of young people, who reminisced their junior high school days during such "pre-war" songs as "Suzie Q" and "Bye, Bye Love." Pa Everly joined his sons, Phil and Don, on stage and the audience "grooved" on his Tennessee style.

Joni Mitchell Applauded

A young Canadian girl, who made her debut at the Festival a few years ago, Joni Mitchell held the audience spellbound with her "pure folk" songs on guitar and piano. Her own song "He Plays Real Good for Free" which relates the story of an old man who plays his clarinet for free on the streets of New York, and the audience request "The Circle Game" were rich, soulful folk sounds, which contrasted with the frolicsome arias of country western.

After intermission, the concert swung into the gospel and soul sounds of the Cook County Convention gospel singers and the B.C. Harmonizers. The Rev. Frederick Douglass Kirkpatrick and his brother had some more preaching in "Burn, Baby, Burn." The audience grew restless with the gospel sound—unfortunately, the amplification distorted the dissonant, soulful quality and during one number, "Testify," the crowd began to do just that and started dancing in the aisles.

Guthrie A Disappointment

Last to appear in the concert—the one everybody was waiting for—Arlo Guthrie was probably one of the greatest disappointments of the program. Said one disappointed fan, "He just didn't give us what we wanted."

Guthrie, son of the late folk singer Woody Guthrie, has not virtuoso's voice, but his rambling storyteller style, in such songs as "Alice's Restaurant"—the song of the draft protest movement—has won him many fans. His all too short commentary on Moses and the Pharaoh was delightful and received cheers and accolades from the crowd; audience requests went unheeded. Sunday's gospel concert related the themes of the Folk Festival with calls for peace and black freedom. The service was ecumenical and of today. It featured the moving, spiritual reli-



MUSIC FOR PEACE — Veteran folk singer Pete Seeger charmed his young audience at the Newport Folk Festival with his songs of protest and peace. Looking like carved wooden figure of an old salt in his matie's hat, Captain Pete is currently sailing a replica of a Hudson River sloop, the "Clearwater", to the Hudson River where she will be a floating museum to encourage cleaning up of polluted waters and "a polluted society."

gion of the folk singers, singing for freedom and peace, and the young people present, working for the goals of a better world.

In sum, the Folk Festival this year was not built on name-brands—there was no Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Jan and Sylvia, Simon and Garfunkel, Judy Collins. And perhaps this says something for the young people today, who are spending a lot of time thinking about and acting on our social ills of poverty and war. It doesn't matter so much who socks it to 'em, but rather what the message is. The Newport Folk Festival had a lot to say about peace, freedom, and Black liberation to anyone who tuned in.

—ADB

Three Time Loser

NEW HAVEN, Ind. (AP) — Jack Patton, New Haven service station operator, was a three-time loser in financial circles Wednesday.

He got two \$10 bills from customers, received another in change from a tavern and then discovered they all had the same serial number.

Police said the ink could be rubbed off with a wet fingertip.

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PAINTING STOLEN
MAYBOLDS, Scotland
(AP) — Thieves burgled the
late Dwight D. Eisenhower's
apartment in Colleen Castle
and stole a painting by French
artist Jean Baptiste Huet and a
porcelain snuff box. The apart-
ment was given to the former
U.S. President for his services
as supreme allied commander
in World War II.