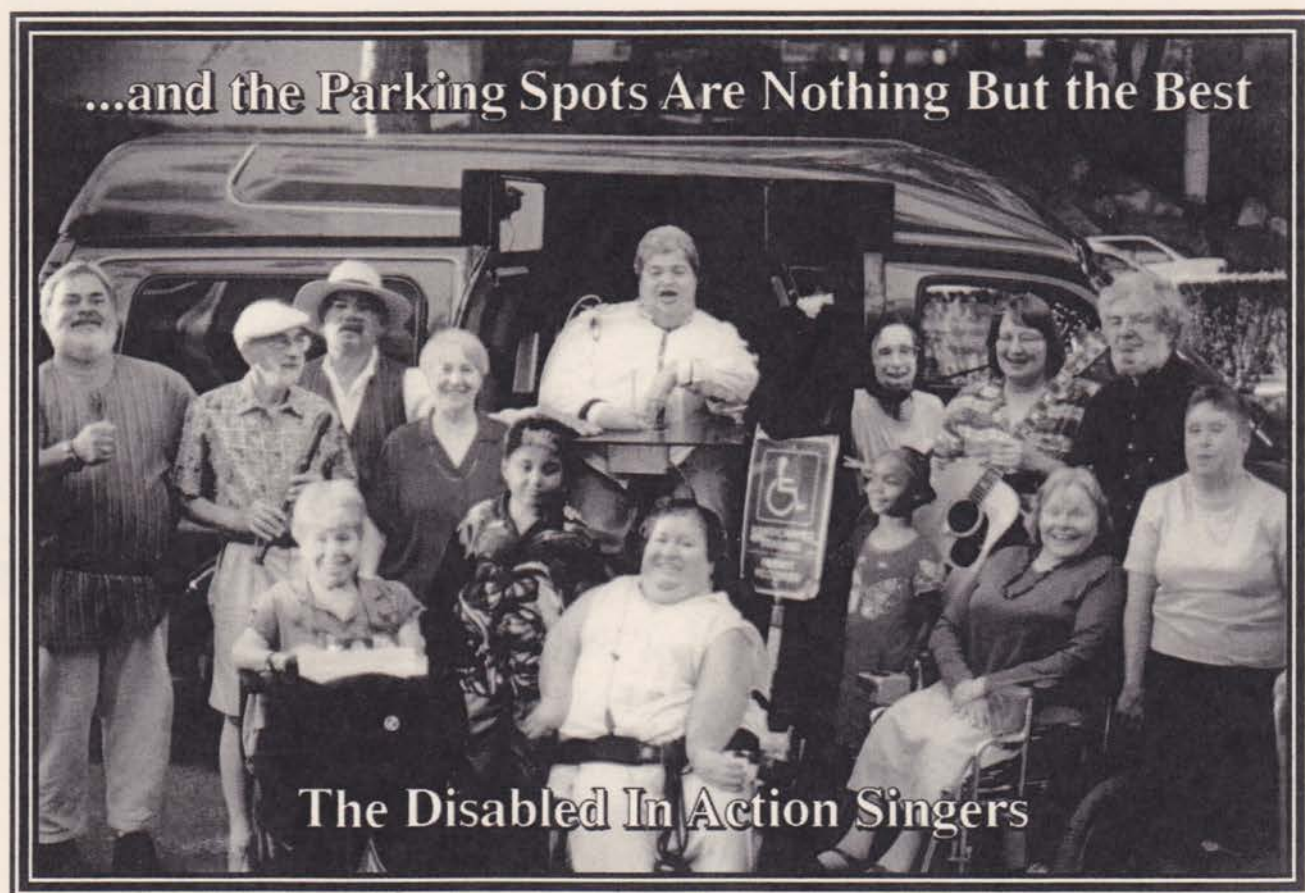


# **The Disabled In Action Singers**



**...and the  
Parking Spots  
Are Nothing  
But the Best**

# ...and the Parking Spots Are Nothing But the Best

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www.DisabledInAction.org

**Producers:** Marcia Bernstein  
Barry Kornhauser  
Eric Levine

**Recording Engineer:** Warren Shaw

**Artistic and Recording Consultant:** Barry Kornhauser

**Recorded in** Marcia's Living Studio, Bronx, NY

**Cover Concept by** Maura Gregory

**Cover Photo by** Gerry Hinson

**Cover Design and Layout by** Marcia Bernstein, Jenn Duncan and Eric Levine

**Photography by** Gerry Hinson and others

**Book assembled and edited by** Marcia Bernstein, Jenn Duncan,  
Sidney Emerman and Eric Levine



## The Disabled In Action Singers

**Musical Director:** Eric Levine

**The Performers:**

Sam Anderson, vocals  
Marcia Bernstein, vocals  
Anne Emerman, vocals  
Sidney Emerman, vocals, recorder  
Maura Gregory, vocals, guitar, tambourine  
Michael Imperiale, vocals

Eric Levine, vocals, 12-string guitar, banjo-mandolin  
Kathy Lockwood, vocals  
Mary Ann Marra, vocals  
Marilyn Saviola, vocals  
Mel Tanzman, vocals  
Frieda Zames, vocals

**Guest Artists:** Nancy de Luca, harmonica on TWO GOOD ARMS and STAND WITH ME  
Paris Gregory, vocal on WHEN THE CHILDREN CRY  
Heather Lev, vocal and guitar on NEVER STAND ALONE  
Danny Robert, vocal on PETER SINGER'S WONDERFUL WORLD  
Andres Tanzman, vocal on WHEN THE CHILDREN CRY

## The Songs

1. THE FISHING IS FREE 2:40
2. GOD BLESS THE STRANGER 3:54
3. NOT DONE YET 4:10
4. THE BRAVEST 2:49
5. WHEN THE CHILDREN CRY 3:14
6. MODERN MATURITY 2:42
7. TWO GOOD ARMS 4:49
8. OLD MAN RIVER 2:34
9. THE OLOGY SONG 2:27

10. TO BE STRONG 4:19
11. PETER SINGER'S WONDERFUL WORLD 2:53
12. LET THE CHILDREN STARE 1:55
13. KEEP CREATING 3:20
14. HOME, HOME IN NEW YORK 1:53
15. STAND WITH ME 4:31
16. REMEMBER MARTIN KING 6:59
17. NEVER STAND ALONE 2:51

# The DIA Singers

## The Performers



**Sam Anderson** was born in 1929 in southeastern Massachusetts and grew up in a rural suburb of Washington, DC, during the period of World War II. Although his family were staunch admirers of President Roosevelt, they were not elated when polio left Sam, at the age of 17, in the condition in which FDR had previously been left by that as yet unconquered disease. The State of Virginia offered to send Sam to a residential training school in the Appalachians to be rehabilitated and receive an education in how to make orthopedic shoes. But Sam chose instead to work at a small radio station in East

Tennessee, starting his choral singing career by recording a single with the local L.C. Smith band. After returning to Massachusetts for a Ph.D. from Harvard in The Psychology of Language, he spent most of the 60's teaching in the Linguistics Program at Wesleyan University. Sam finally put it all together after joining DIA in 1976. After being elected Public Relations VP, he realized that the movement needed a radio program (on Pacifica's WBAI), and he began airing the disability rights message in spoken word and song.

**Marcia Bernstein** can't remember ever not being a singer and a harmonizer (she'll sing any part from soprano to bass). As a matter of fact, she always has a tune in her head (stop and ask her any time, and she'll tell you what tune is currently in there). She is a Reiki Master and a proud grandmother and does volunteer work with babies in New York City. Marcia worked for over 20 years as a teacher of deaf children and enjoys performing some songs in sign language. She has been enthusiastically learning to play percussion instruments and is especially interested in African drumming. She joined The DIA Singers in 1992.



**Anne Emerman** is a life-long activist for the civil rights of people with disabilities. She contracted polio in 1944 and spent most of her childhood and adolescence in acute and chronic care institutions. She has worked as a psychiatric social worker at Bellevue and as Director of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities in the Dinkins Administration. She recently left retirement to serve as Senior Staff to the New York City Council Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Substance Abuse and Disability. Anne promotes using music and song as an organizing and coalition-building tool to communicate the disability community's message of integration, equal access and opportunity for everyone.



**Sidney Emerman** didn't learn folk music at his mother's knee but in Cornell grad school along with a great group of student folkies, starting in the early '50s with old-time songs, then expanding into topical songs. Annual concerts by Pete Seeger were a strong influence musically and politically. Sid's parents' love of classical music, older brother's 1940 big band records, and college roommate's old jazz records fed his musical soul, as did playing trumpet in high school and college bands. After "losing his lip," he learned recorder in group lessons and now enjoys piping up on everything from folk to jazz to '40's pop. Marriage to fellow DIA Singer Anne brought him into friendship with - and enthusiastic musical and political support of - the disability activist community. Sid retired in '95 from his professorship of 27 years at Kingsborough Community College where he taught chemistry, nutrition, and environmental science.

**Maura Gregory** is a lawyer who, like Merlin in days of yore, lives her life backwards, from future to past. This explains why she can always remember your name when she "first" meets you, but not after. This also explains why she was (will be?) at her wisest during childhood. She lives in upper Westchester County with her husband, fellow DIA Singer Mel Tanzman, and their children Andres Tanzman and Paris Gregory, who are also very wise. Their cat, Rosie T., is the wisest of all.



**Michael Imperiale** has been a member of The DIA Singers from the start and has been singing all his life. While dyslexia presented some daunting academic challenges when he was a child, Michael excelled as a singer in school activities and camp plays. He sings in the shower, he sings in the kitchen, he sings while riding along in his scooter (he was born with a condition called dystonia), and he sings on the bus and on Amtrak. As a soloist, his deep rich voice expresses anger, sadness, humor and romance.



**Eric Levine**, singer and twelve-string guitarist, has performed all over the East Coast and shares a special magic with children. Eric is the Musical Director of The DIA Singers and a working musician, music teacher and peace and community activist. He has had kidney failure since adolescence and receives dialysis three times a week. While he does not underestimate the life-

changing effects of his condition over the past 30 years, he also does not let it get the better of him. Eric believes in the power of song to bring people together and encourages us to turn off the TV and reclaim our own creativity. The Eric Levine Songbook, which is part autobiographical, part political songbook and part resource guide, is soon to be released.

**Kathryn (Kathy) Lockwood** was born and raised in Queens and currently lives on Roosevelt Island. Totally blind at birth, Kathy had over forty surgical procedures during her first four years of life, resulting in some partial vision in both eyes. She has worked for various organizations in shipping and maintenance, and she is studying computer programming and keyboard. A member of The Lighthouse Chorus for 21 years, she has always loved to sing and listen to music, especially classic rock and folk. She joined The DIA Singers in 1997.





**Mary Ann Marra** was born in Brooklyn and grew up in Staten Island. She was born with a condition called Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita and has the distinction of having been the March of Dimes poster girl two years in a row in 1967 and 1968. She is graduate of Staten Island University and Hofstra University and makes her living as Special Events Coordinator for Independence Care System in New York City. Mary Ann's beautiful soprano voice has graced The DIA Singers since 1992, and she has traveled the Northeast as a cabaret singer with the National Theatre Workshop for the Handicapped.

**Marilyn Saviola** had polio as a child and grew up with her disability, including many years spent in an institution. She has been a disability rights advocate since the 1970's and was a founding member of DIA. In her professional life she has worked in the field of disability as a rehab counselor and as Executive Director of an independent living center. She is currently the Director of Advocacy at Independence Care System, which is a long-term care program for people with physical disabilities. The issues in which she is most involved are access to health care for people with disabilities and the right to personal care services to insure that people with disabilities can live in their own homes as opposed to being institutionalized.



**Mel Tanzman** has been singing from the age of seven. He wanted dancing lessons but there were no boys in the class, and it just wasn't done in the fifties, so singing lessons had to do. Mel is a social worker by education and an advocate/activist in practice, when he isn't saddled with administrative work. Although Mel has been disabled from birth, he didn't identify as such until he began working with people with disabilities in 1986. Mel has a passion for a good struggle, especially when freedom and independence are on the line. He was actively involved in organizing against cuts in home care services in New York State. He currently is the

Executive Director of an Independent Living Center in Westchester and a leader in the struggle to free people from nursing homes. A word of warning: Beware of standing too near when Mel is "belting one out." His singing voice, un-mic'd, has been known to soar over the amplified instrumentals of rock musicians.

**Frieda Zames**, Associate Professor of Mathematics Emeritus at New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), has co-authored with her sister **The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation** (Temple University Press, 2001). After contracting polio at age 2, Frieda spent the next 7 years between hospital and "convalescent home." She has been a disability rights activist for over twenty-five years, including several stints as president of Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York. She was responsible for the NJIT campus becoming accessible in 1978 - which turned out to be beneficial to her when she became a scooter user about eight years later. Among her accomplishments at NJIT was writing the grants and directing a summer program for six years that serviced pre-college students with a variety of disabilities. A member of The DIA Singers from its beginning, she loves to sing in groups and has been singing along with others since the late fifties.



## Guest Artists



**Nancy De Luca** has been making music since she was a child. In her adult life she has played guitar, mandolin and harmonica with a variety of bands. She brought her harmonica down from Provincetown, MA, where she lives, to lend her talent to this recording. Before moving from New York to Boston in 1986, she had been a regular member of The DIA Singers for four years. Since then, she has enjoyed making "guest appearances" with the group at the Clearwater Revival and on the previous DIA Singers recording, **IN MOTION**. Professionally, Nancy is a chemist and educator and has spent many years designing science activities for students with disabilities.

**Paris Gregory**, daughter of DIA Singers Maura Gregory and Mel Tanzman, sings with her brother Andres on "When the Children Cry." Paris is seven years old and in second grade and loves ballet and gymnastics.





**Heather Lev**, who is an award-winning singer/songwriter/guitarist/multi-instrumentalist, has written over 340 philosophical, inspiring, and political songs. Upon hearing her anthemic song *Never Stand Alone*, Fred Small declared, "That's a great song," and Odetta was moved to shout "Bravo!" Heather's songs have been published and quoted in *The New York Times*, *Songs for Peace Magazine* and *Auto-Free Times Magazine*, and she has performed on the same bill with Pete Seeger and Oscar Brand. To contact her, buy her CD, or hear other songs, visit [www.heatherlev.com](http://www.heatherlev.com).

**Danny Robert** was born in 1947, the son of Fannie and Sam. In 1954 Sam became a member of Local 52, the International Alliance of Theatrical and Studio Employees (IATSE), which paved the way for Danny to be a New York film industry prop man and set decorator for 20 years until multiple sclerosis forced him to retire at age 41. In 1998, when Sam retired at the age of 90, Danny inherited his dad's position as Executive Coordinator of the New York Council of Motion Picture and Television Unions (established by Sam in 1972). Danny is happy to have also inherited his father's ability to rhyme. Danny feels fortunate in the circumstances of his birth and career and even more fortunate to have been awarded home care in 1990, as well as meeting disability rights activists early on in his own disability. He embraces the philosophy of independent living and disability rights and the tactics and techniques of activism as a way of life. "Bottom line," says Danny, "I love my community and I am proud to be disabled."



**Andres Tanzman**, son of DIA Singers Mel Tanzman and Maura Gregory, sings with his sister Paris on "When the Children Cry." He is nine years old and in fourth grade and is the biggest Mets fan who ever lived.

## Artistic "Angels"



**Jenn Duncan** (Graphic Design and Layout Consultant) grew up in Congo, Africa, where her parents were teachers of math and science. After studying engineering, science, media and theater, she worked as a high school teacher in the areas of math, science, computers and English. Her Masters thesis involved her favorite combination of skills, that of designing and implementing physical devices which utilize a person's whole body motion as creative inputs to the computer. Her more recent career as a programming consultant and website developer and manager ([www.jennerator.com](http://www.jennerator.com)) has led to various educational projects with the likes of Sesame Street, museums, and publishers of collegiate textbooks. She avidly enjoys singing, drumming, movement, and practicing Reiki. Jenn was diagnosed in the year 2000 with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and invites you to learn more about this invisible disability by visiting her web site at [www.themask.org](http://www.themask.org).

**Gerry Hinson** (Photographer) grew up in Yonkers as a working class kid with an education - and fit in there about as well as roller skates in a cow pasture. Transplanted into New York City, he discovered the Village Voice, folk music coffeehouses, off-off-Broadway avant-garde, The Living Theatre, War Resisters League, Margo Adler, La Mama, progressive politics and environmentalism..., gaining a sense of all things being (almost) possible. Taking the fork in the road whenever he came to it (to quote Yogi Berra), he became a Photographer, a human service specialist with disabled persons (currently, a Case Manager at WARC [Westchester Association for Retarded Citizens]), a camera repairman, a musical instrument builder (especially Can-joes), occasional 12-string player and an avid bicyclist. He has involved himself in tenant activism, house management (for The NY Folk Musicians Cooperative), concert production (Co-Producer of the Greenwich Village and Central Park Folk Festivals) and photojournalism (for **Fast Folk Musical Magazine** and **Broadside**). Encounters with many special people have included his wife Nancy Hershatter (Northeast Regional Representative for the Children's Music Network), Eric Levine (via People's Music Network), & the people at Westchester Disabled On the Move.





**Barry Kornhauser** (Artistic and Recording Consultant) was born in the midwest of the Bronx and presently lives in Brooklyn. He is a composer, arranger, teacher and multi-instrumentalist (bass, cello, guitar, mandola) in a wide variety of musical environments. At present he is actively (some would say obsessively) developing an approach to cello playing as an accompaniment instrument and inching forward on a comprehensive teaching manual for guitar as well as a book on polyrhythm. Regarding his part in the production of this CD, he says "I am honored for this opportunity to participate in the making of **...and the Parking Spots Are Nothing But the Best** with long time friend Eric Levine and my new DIA friends."

**Warren Shaw** (Recording Engineer) was raised a "wheelchair diaper baby" by his father, Julius A. Shaw, a pioneering disability rights activist and co-founder of DIA. Warren is an attorney and a New York City historian who recently completed a year-long urban history series on WNYC-AM. He is also a professor in New York University's Urban Design Studies Program. Warren's recent recording credits include choral, blues, folk and rock ensembles and solo artists, and he works extensively in front of the mic as well, as a professional drummer.



# The Songs

Gerry Hinson (Photographer of our cover photo and most of the other photos in this booklet) brought his camera to one of our recording sessions and was moved to write these words:

*Working with The DIA Singers for this production has woven together so much that I value: the Self-Advocacy and Independent Living Movements, great harmony singing, songs that give us non-songwriters our voice, and positive portrait photography. It was an honor to be asked to contribute to the making of this album and my pleasure to photograph The DIA Singers. Through my lens I saw them in many aspects - wisdom, resourcefulness, resilience, strength, sparkle, humor, intensity and grace. As a tenet of the self-advocacy movement states, these are not "disabled persons," but instead, persons with disabilities - and remarkable, compelling persons, at that. I hope that their photos can come close to projecting their compelling personalities, in the same way that this recording transmits the impact of their powerful songs and harmonies.*



# THE FISHING IS FREE

by Jane Field © 1994

Vocals: solo by Sam  
with backup by The Chorus  
12-String Guitar: Eric  
Guitar: Maura

Oh, the fishing is free with your disability.  
You don't need a license like the rest.  
Movies are half the price; well, isn't that nice?  
**...and the Parking Spots Are Nothing But the Best.**

So don't you wish that you were disabled?! Disabled is a better way to be.  
With crutches, canes and braces and wheelchairs to run races,  
Oh, don't you wish that you were just like me?!

Oh, Access-a-ride is great if you really like to wait.  
It's so much fun to try to book a ride.  
You phone three days ahead and if you're lucky, so it's said,  
You might get there, but if you don't, don't be surprised.

So don't you wish that you were disabled?! Disabled is a better way to be.  
Some chairs are motorized, high-tech, computerized.  
Oh, don't you wish that you were just like me?!

The Deaf have got sign language. The Blind have got their dogs.  
Their loyal trusted guides are at their side.  
All people have their vices - WE have our DEvices.  
Oh, don't you envy us our privileged lives?!

So don't you wish that you were disabled?! Disabled is a better way to be.  
There're special entrances in stores.  
They let us in through the back doors.  
Oh, don't you wish that you were just like me?!

You know, they don't know what to call us, what labels should befall us,  
And there're some dandy terms from which to choose.  
MY favorite's "WHEELCHAIR BOUND" 'cause it has a BONDAGE sound.  
What fun to guess what words they're gonna use!

So don't you wish that you were disabled?! Disabled is a better way to be.  
With all these benefits and perks, that's how the system works.  
Oh, don't you wish that you were just like me?!

Oh, the fishing is free with your disability.  
You don't need a license like the rest.  
Movies are half the price; well, isn't that nice?  
**...and the Parking Spots Are Nothing But the Best**

# GOD BLESS THE STRANGER © 2003

Lyrics by Bette Anderson

Melody by Abby Gostein

Vocals: Marcia  
Guitar: Maura  
Recorder: Sidney

So long ago, in the bitter snow on a cold November day,  
With bitter woes, my momma chose to carry me away  
From the only home I had ever known and thought I would always,  
Barely half-way grown, I was made to roam through a strange and lonely place.

I could never hide all the fear inside that a little child could hold.  
At my momma's side I broke down and cried as we stood out in the cold.  
How my momma tried, tried to push aside all the terrors never told.  
Sharing senseless pride, from the truth we shied 'til the stories would unfold.

Chorus:

And we said  
God bless the stranger and bless the stranger's place,  
Where a heavenly arranger took us into her embrace,  
And the chains broke free from my mom and me in that strange and crowded space,  
And we said  
God bless this stranger and God bless this stranger's place.

With a bath, a meal, we went on to heal; we began our lives brand new.  
We could laugh for real, and we began to feel good sensations that were true.  
Stopped, the hurt and pain that drove mom insane and was driving me there, too.  
Gone the man's disdain, and his terror's reign, from the moment that we flew.

Chorus

In my grown-up world, there is still that girl from another place and time.  
Mem'ries jump and twirl in a jumbled swirl of the ramblings in my mind.  
Through the gauze unfurled, every wisdom's pearl that I might have left behind  
In the smoke that curled 'round that little girl when our lives were less than kind.

Chorus

God bless this stranger - and God bless this stranger's place.

# NOT DONE YET © 2000

Lyrics by Mel Tanzman

Music by Maura Gregory

*Ed Roberts (1940 - 1995), the "grandfather" of the Independent Living Movement, was the inspiration for this song. After contracting Polio at age 10, this young athlete required aid in breathing for the rest of his life, by way of an "iron lung" and, later on, a more modern ventilator. He was the first student with quadriplegia to attend the University of California in Berkeley, where he organized students with disabilities and, after graduation, founded the first Independent Living Center in the nation. He worked as Commissioner of Rehabilitation under Governor Jerry Brown and founded the World Institute on Disability, a "think tank" that addressed the critical issues facing people with disabilities. He was also a proud member of "The International Order of Giraffes," a bona fide organization of people who "stick their necks out." Mel was privileged to know Ed as a brash and caring person, cherished friend and formidable enemy. Of all his prestigious accomplishments, he was most proud of being a father and raising his son.*

Vocals: Solo by Mel  
with backup by Marcia  
Guitar and Tambourine: Maura

## Chorus:

Well, I'm not done yet; I've got lots of living to do,  
Sunrise and sunset, the frosty morning dew.  
There's not much that I lack; I'm OK, so don't you fret,  
And please tell all those quacks that I'm - Not Done Yet.

I remember that young boy who couldn't take a breath  
And the doctor who pronounced it a fate much worse than death.  
My mom would not accept it; well, she fought for my right to live.  
She saw beyond my frailties and knew I had a lot to give.

Well, a man in the airport terminal said if he was in my shoes  
He'd end it all so quickly, yeah, that was his point of view.  
Well, I remember his shocked face when I told him where to go,  
That I don't need his sympathy; don't speak of what you don't know.

## Chorus

Then there's that faith healing preacher; he wants to lay on hands.  
Says he could make me whole again if I had the faith to understand  
That God had given him the power to cure the sick and the lame.  
I told him he could keep his prayers; my spirit would not be tamed.

You see, I've dined with Presidents; I've raised children, too.  
I swam with the dolphins; Hell, there ain't nothing that I can't do.  
You see, the things that imprison me, the ties that really bind  
Are your prehistoric attitudes, and the sickness is in your mind.

## Chorus

Not done yet (not done yet), I said I'm not done yet (not done yet),  
Hell, no, I'm not done yet (not done yet).  
I said I'm not done yet (not done yet), oh, no, I'm not done yet.  
I said I'm not done yet, oh, no, I'm not done yet.  
I said I'm not done, no, no, no, no, no, no.  
I said I'm not done, no - Not Done Yet!

# THE BRAVEST

by Tom Paxton © 2001

*This narrative account of the World Trade Center disaster achieves a rare combination of stark horror and spiritual transcendence. In performing it, we echo Tom's memorial to the heroic efforts of the members of FDNY who died on 9/11.*

*In singing this song, Sam dedicates it to Fire Captain William F. Burke of Engine 21. Having led his men into the North Tower, Captain Burke advised several companies that the South Tower had collapsed. As others evacuated, he remained behind to assist a quadriplegic man. Both were among those lost when the North Tower came down.*

Vocals: Solo by Sam  
with backup by The Chorus  
12-String Guitar: Eric

The first plane hit the other tower just after I got in.  
It left a gaping, fiery hole where offices had been.  
We stood and watched in horror as we saw the first ones fall.  
Then someone yelled "Get out! Get out! They're trying to kill us all."

I grabbed the pictures from my desk and joined the flight for life.  
With every step I called the names of my children and my wife.  
And then we heard them coming up from several floors below,  
A crowd of fire fighters with their heavy gear in tow.

Chorus:

Now every time I try to sleep, I'm haunted by the sound  
Of The Bravest pounding up the stairs while we were running down.

And when they met us on the stairs, they said we were too slow.  
"Get out! Get out!" They yelled at us - "The whole thing's gonna go."  
They didn't have to tell us twice; we'd seen the world on fire,  
So we kept on running down the stairs while they kept climbing higher.

We finally made it to the street; we ran through ash and smoke.  
I didn't know which way to run; I thought that I would choke.  
A fireman took me by the arm and pointed me uptown.  
Then "Christ!" I heard him whisper, as the tower came roaring down.

Now I go to funerals for folks I never knew.  
The pipers play Amazing Grace as the coffins come in view.  
They must have seen it coming as they turned to face the fire.  
They sent us down to safety, and they kept on climbing higher.

Chorus:

Now every time I try to sleep, I'm haunted by the sound  
Of The Bravest pounding up the stairs while we were running down,  
Of The Bravest pounding up the stairs while we were running down.

# WHEN THE CHILDREN CRY

by Vito Bratta & Mike Tramp © 1987

Vocals: Solo by Mary Ann  
with backup by Paris Gregory and  
Andres Tanzman, Guest Vocalists

Little child, dry your crying eyes.  
How can I explain the fear you feel inside?  
'Cause you were born into this evil world  
Where man is killing man and no one knows just why.

What have we become? Just look what we have done.  
All that we've destroyed, you must build again.

When the children cry, let them know we've tried  
'Cause when the children sing, then the New World begins.

Little child, you must show the way  
To a better day for all the young.  
'Cause you were born for the world to see  
That we all can live with love and peace.

No more presidents - and all the wars will end -  
One united world under God.

When the children cry let them know we've tried.  
When the children sing, then the New World begins.

When the children cry, let them know we've tried  
(Children: Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are).  
When the children sing, then the New World begins  
(Children: Up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky,  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are).

No more presidents, and all the wars will end,  
One united world under God.  
What have we become? Just look what we have done.  
All that we've destroyed, you must build again.

When the children cry, let them know we've tried.  
When the children fight, let them know it ain't right.  
When the children pray, let them know the way  
'Cause when the children sing, then the New World begins.

# MODERN MATURITY

by Tom Paxton © 1993

Vocals: Solo by Kathy  
with backup by Marcia and The Chorus  
12-String Guitar: Eric

When you find it in your mail for the first time, my friends,  
Then you know you've turned the corner and you're getting gray.  
It's a sure sign of decline; it's the start of the end.  
When your wrinkles outnumber your hairs, then it's headed your way.

Chorus:

Modern Maturity means you're getting old.  
Now you get the magazine that you hide from your friends.  
Once it was the Rolling Stone; it was thrill after thrill.  
Now Modern Maturity means over the hill.

When Mick Jagger has his breakfast of yogurt and bran,  
Does he read the descriptions by mail of self-rising chairs?  
Or you keep on rockin' and rollin' long as you can.  
Then you sit in your little seat and you ride up the stairs.

Chorus

I look through its pages, and what I see there  
Is that everyone looks about twenty-five with white hair.

You can get polyester pants for \$19.95.  
You can get your grandchildren's picture on your coffee cup.  
If you're tired of walking, there's a scooter that you can drive  
Or a button to push if you've fallen and you can't get up.

Chorus

# TWO GOOD ARMS

by Charlie King © 1978

Charlie King Pied Asp. Music (BMI)

*In Boston in 1927, two Italian immigrant anarchist labor organizers, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were framed on robbery and murder charges - and executed. Fifty years later, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts proclaimed that their executions were a miscarriage of justice. For over 15 years (first with Four Parts of the Movement Chorus and now with The DIA Singers), Mel has been singing this song, which celebrates the strength and dignity of working people and memorializes the injustices to which they have been subjected. The lyrics are derived from Vanzetti's statement to the Court:*

*"Everybody that knows these two arms knows very well that I did not need to go in between the street and kill a man to take the money. I can live with my two arms and live well....I am not only innocent of these two crimes, but in all my life I have never stole and I have never killed and I have never spilled blood...but I have struggled all my life, since I began to reason to eliminate crime from the earth."*

*Let us always remember!*

Vocals: Solo by Mel  
with backup by Marcia and The Chorus  
Guitar: Maura

Banjo-mandolin: Eric  
Recorder: Sidney  
Harmonica: Nancy De Luca, Guest Instrumentalist

Who will remember the hands so white and fine  
That touched the finest linen, that poured the finest wine?  
Who will remember the genteel words they spoke,  
As they called the lives of two good men a nuisance or a joke?

Chorus:

"And all who know these two good arms  
Know I never had to rob or kill;  
I can live by my own two hands and live well,  
And all my life I have struggled to rid the earth of all such crimes."

Who will remember Judge Webster Thayer  
With one hand on the gavel, the other resting on his chair?  
Who will remember the hate-filled words he said,  
Speaking to the living in the language of the dead?

Chorus

Who will remember the hand that pulled the switch  
That took the lives of two good men in the service of the rich?  
Who will remember the one who gave the nod  
Or the chaplain standing near at hand to invoke the name of god?

Chorus

We will remember this good shoemaker.  
We will remember this poor fish peddler.  
We will remember all the strong arms and hands  
That never once found justice in the hands that rule this land.

Final Chorus:

And all who knew these two good men  
Knew they never had to rob or kill.  
Each had lived by his own two hands and lived well,  
And all their lives they had struggled to rid the earth of all such crimes.  
And all our lives we must struggle to rid the earth of all such crimes.

# OLD MAN RIVER

by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein © 1927  
with some modifications of lyrics by Paul Robeson in 1936

Vocal: Michael  
12-String Guitar: Eric

There's an old man called The Mississippi.  
That's the old man don't like to be.  
What does he care if the world's got trouble,  
What does he care if the land ain't free?

Old Man River, that Old Man River,  
He don't say nothing, but must know something.  
He keeps on rolling, he just keeps rolling along.

He don't plant 'taters, and he don't plant cotton,  
But them that plants 'em is soon forgotten,  
But Old Man River, he keeps rolling along.

You and me, we sweat and strain,  
Body all aching and wracked with pain.  
"Tote that barge, and you lift that bale!"  
You show a little grit and you land in jail.

But I keep laughing instead of crying.  
I must keep fighting until I'm dying.  
But Old Man River just keeps rolling along.

# THE OLOGY SONG

Lyrics by Eric Levine © 2000

to the tune of "I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major General"

by (and with ap-OLOGIES to) Gilbert and Sullivan (and Tom Lehrer, too)

Vocal and 12-String Guitar: Eric

The doctors called neurologists, they specialize in nerves.  
The doctors called psychiatrists, they talk to you with words.  
They both prescribe medicines which need a prescription,  
Which alter many things that affect your nervous system  
(Isn't that interesting?!).

The people who will X-ray you are called X-ray technologists.  
The doctor who reads it is called a radiologist.  
There're sonograms and PET scans, you really need not wonder why,  
But if you need a CAT scan, then ask "why not an MRI?"

The doctor for your heart is called a cardiologist.  
Likewise, when it's contagious, it's an epidemiologist.  
An obstetrician's job is the delivery of babies,  
And a veterinarian will immunize your dog for rabies.

Any kind of doctor is referred to as physician.  
When they are for children, they are pediatricians.  
Surgeons operate on you; they're really not apologists.  
The doctor who puts you to sleep's an anesthesiologist.

When it is your bones, you must see an orthopedist.  
They're very down to earth; they are really not elitist.  
There is a rheumatologist who is a doctor for your joints.  
They have to know so many things because they cover many points.

The doctor for your kidneys is called a nephrologist.  
Likewise, when it's your liver, it is a hepatologist.  
When it's your immunity, you need an immunologist.  
And when you have a hemorrhoid, you go to a proctologist.

For the penis and the bladder you must dial a urologist.  
For women there's a check-up from a gynecologist.  
The male he has to check his parts as often as the women do.  
There're lots of nasty germs out there; he doesn't have to be a zoo.

When you're a senior citizen, you see a gerontologist  
Whose job it is to coordinate between the other ologists.  
Likewise, with serious illness to an internist don't be hesitant.  
The young whippersnapper is probably a resident.

The sugar daddy doctor's a diabetologist.  
The doctor playing golf may be a parasitologist [sorry, couldn't resist].  
The doctor writing medical books just might be a revisionist,  
And the doctor eating Blimpies might be a nutritionist.

These are some of the specialists within the system you will find,  
And there're many other experts if you seek a broader paradigm.

# TO BE STRONG

by Laura Berkson © 1987 Brave Ann Music (BMI)

Vocals: Solo by Marcia  
with backup by The Chorus  
Guitar: Maura  
12-String guitar: Eric  
Recorder: Sidney

*This song celebrates people who are affected by HIV and who cope with the illness, the issue, the ignorance.*

Mama, give up your angry pain. Papa, give up your fearful shame.  
Sister, raise your voice clear and loud. People, it's time to be out and proud!

Chorus:

We're gonna rise, rise, rise, rise, all hands together to be strong (2x).

This brother is awaiting the time he will be taken.  
Now he's seeking refuge from the twisted fright,  
And another man who loves him sheds his own fear just to hold him  
And share a moment's safety in his long and restless night.

Chorus

Some have lost a parent, some a son or daughter,  
Some have lost the partner who's been their rising sun,  
And some have died with friends around while others pass on lonely.  
Some are learning how to help to ease the journey on.

Chorus

People's fears are burning. Homes are havens lost.  
Some spread lies; to panic they're resigned,  
But dignity and life can be retained through love and reason.  
The plague we really fight is a dis-ease of the mind.

Chorus

And the love that gets us through these times  
Of sunken hearts and uphill climbs,  
It lifts its meaning high where we can see  
The healing in our own eyes, shining.

Chorus

...All hands together!

Chorus

# PETER SINGER'S WONDERFUL WORLD

Lyrics by Danny Robert © 1999

to the tune of "Wonderful World" by Sam Cooke

Vocal: Danny Robert, Guest Vocalist  
12-String Guitar: Eric

Peter Singer is my given name.  
Bioethics is my claim to fame.  
I teach my students to know right from wrong.  
I'll teach you, too; just listen to my song.

Disabled infants have no personhood.  
Think we should kill them quick and, if we could,  
What a wonderful world it would be.

Well, I don't claim to have all the answers, but I've got two or three.  
By helping animals and poor folks and killing the disabled,  
We'll go down in history.

Don't see no value in disabled life.  
I've got two daughters, money and a wife.  
If we could rid them of their misery,  
Quick death with dignity will set them free.

Now, listen, parents, you'll avoid the pain.  
Kill crippled infants; you can only gain.  
And what a wonderful world it would be.

Well, I don't claim to speak for all Princeton; I'm just teaching my class,  
But if Princeton sanctions the truth of my teachings,  
I'll set the value system on its ass.

I really don't know no disabled folks,  
Think that the ADA is just a hoax.  
Don't know no blind nor deaf nor amputees,  
No brain-dead retards and no spine injuries.

But I do know they're all better off dead,  
And I know that if we use our heads,  
What a wonderful world it would be.

Well, I don't claim to be God Almighty; I'm just an agnostic Jew,  
But if I were Lord of this whole Univers-ity,  
I know exactly what I would do 'cause

Peter Singer is my given name.  
Bioethics is the name of my game.  
I taught my students to know right from wrong.  
Now that I've taught you, help me with my song.

Disabled infants have no personhood.  
Think we should kill them quick, and if we could,  
What a wonderful world, what a wonderful world,  
What a wonderful world it would be.

# LET THE CHILDREN STARE © 2003

Lyrics by Bette Anderson

Melody by Marcia Bernstein

*During the "Cagney and Lacey" TV show, Sharon Gless's character posed as a disabled person in a wheelchair. Her remarks about being treated as invisible, after a scene with a mother and her young son, inspired this song which has become a staple in The DIA Singers' repertoire. The DIA Singers don't believe in telling children it's not polite to stare at disabled people, preferring instead to welcome candid and innocent curiosity.*

Vocals: Solos by Michael and Sidney, Mel, Mary Ann, Sam  
with backup by Anne, Kathy, Marcia and The Chorus  
12-String Guitar: Eric  
Tambourine: Maura

Don't stop the little children; go ahead and let them stare.  
Their questions are bewild'rin', but show how much they care.  
What they are telling me is that they really see me there,  
So don't tell them they're wrong. Please let the little children stare

Chorus:

Though maybe what you see is not Athena or Adonis,  
Please don't be shy or be afraid. It's fine to look upon us.  
We're all created equally, but with a different skew.  
Let's watch the kids with open eyes and let's all take their cue.  
- Let them see us -

Don't make the children turn away to make sure they won't stare.  
Their wonder as they watch the way I turn and work my chair  
Can show the way so others may be 'coming more aware,  
So don't tell them to look away. Let all the children stare.

Chorus

- Let them lead us -

We'll answer all their questions when they come up close and stare.  
Life isn't always easy and it isn't always fair,  
But kids can make the best of all the feelings we can share  
- So let them gather round me -  
- Let them see us, let them lead us -  
And we'll let the children stare.

# KEEP CREATING

by Bette Anderson © 2003

*A writer who has retinitis pigmentosa drew Bette Anderson back into writing after a hiatus of more than twenty years. This talented friend inspired KEEP CREATING, which has become "the Bar Mitzvah song" since Bette sang it at two different Bar Mitzvah celebrations, first for her 13-year-old grandson, who loves music and reading, is a whiz with computers, has a unique learning style, and lives with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), and again for an adult correctional facility resident who is working hard to turn his life around. We think the message of this song speaks to everyone.*

Vocals: Solo by Marcia  
with backup by The Chorus  
Guitar: Maura  
Recorder: Sidney

Listen to the sounds of your own voices,  
Open every door that takes your key.  
Play a part when anyone rejoices,  
And keep creating who you'd want to be.  
Listen to the songs your heart keeps singing,  
Open up to let your spirit free,  
Gather all the gifts that life keeps bringing,  
And keep creating who you want to be.

Chorus:

You're the only person  
Marking every mile,  
Making you the first one  
Fashioned in your style.  
Soon you'll reach that something  
You'd be proud to be  
When you keep becoming  
The best you're allowed to be.

Don't hide all the books that tell your fables,  
Take the time to notice all you see,  
Don't get caught in someone else's labels,  
But keep creating who you want to be.  
Break the ties when little minds have bound you,  
Follow through to stretch eternity.  
Hold on fast to all the life around you,  
And keep creating who you want to be.

Repeat chorus and first verse

# HOME, HOME IN NEW YORK

Lyrics by Nadina LaSpina and Danny Robert © 2002  
to the tune of "Home on the Range"

*In 1984 New York State passed building codes requiring 100% wheelchair accessible units in new residential building construction. Governor Pataki decided to "upgrade" state codes to reflect new technology and improvements in building and construction. In 2001, the final year of the State Building Code Council's deliberations, Pataki and most of his appointees moved to reduce the 100% access provision to 2%. Vigorous testimony from the disability community got the percentage up from 2% to 10% accessible units. Activists from ADAPT, a national disability rights organization, showed up in Albany in November, 2001, when the "final" vote was to be taken. Some blocked doorways; others slid out of their chairs and shouted "SHAME" and other choice words of outrage.*

*Pataki responded by setting up a meeting for a month later with ADAPT leaders. Over 50 disability advocates in Albany and 50 in New York City, mostly wheelchair users from DIA and NYC/ADAPT, gathered outside the Governor's offices the day of the meeting and refused to leave unless the upgraded code was reinstated 100%. Danny wrote this song, and the protesters raucously sang it outside Pataki's NYC office. The result: the 100% is back -"an accessible code that is great"!*

Vocals: Solos by Mary Ann and Michael  
with backup by The Chorus  
12-String guitar: Eric

Oh, give me a home where my wheelchair can roam,  
Where the doors and the hallways are wide.  
Larger bathrooms there'll be, lower counters for me,  
A home I can live in with pride.

Chorus:

Home, home in New York  
Home in the Empire State.  
For access that's free, wheelchair users agree,  
An accessible code that is great.

Oh, give me a home where my scooter can roam,  
Where the access is easy and free.  
No steps anywhere, not a worry or care.  
I can get in my bathroom and pee (aaah)!

Chorus:

Home, home in New York  
Home in the Empire State.  
For access that's free, scooter users agree,  
An accessible code that is great.

Oh, give me a home where I'm on my own,  
Built as a place I can stay,  
Where I will be free, part of so-ci-e-ty,  
And I can live in my own way.

Chorus:

Home, home in New York  
Home in the Empire State.  
For access that's free, all people agree,  
An accessible code that is great.

# STAND WITH ME

by Maura Gregory © 2000

*A note from the composer: I've taken an active part in the anti-racist struggle for many years. My mother was deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's and took me with her to rallies and door-to-door to sign petitions. In Virginia, this took guts. In the 1980's, my husband and I co-founded an anti-bias group in Brooklyn. We would take action whenever there was an act of bias violence anywhere in New York City.*

*Then I became a parent, and new perspectives emerged for many things in life. But none so deep as my feelings on this issue, because my children are black. One morning I heard the description of what happened to James Byrd in Jasper, Texas, and I couldn't stop crying. All I could think was "that could've been my baby." This song comes from those emotions.*

*I think if every white parent could experience these events with the gut-wrenching fear that black parents have lived with for hundreds of years, we would have a revolution that would stop this violence and change this country forever.*

Vocal and Guitar: Maura  
Lead Guitar: Eric on 12-String  
Harmonica: Nancy De Luca, Guest Instrumentalist

When I woke up this morning, I felt so sick when I heard  
What those racists in Jasper, Texas, did to a black man, James Byrd.

Chorus:  
Parents of white children, please hear my plea.  
If they were killing your babies, you'd be standing here with me.

Her big brown eyes are so innocent,  
His copper brown skin, sweet as chocolate.  
Today I protect them, my little boy, my little girl,  
But so soon they'll be alone out there in this racist world.

Chorus:  
Parents of white children, please hear my plea.  
If they were killing your children, you'd be standing here with me.

All over this city, cops are going wild.  
Each black person they kill was once some mother's child.  
Anthony Baez in the Bronx, Patrick Dorismond on the Manhattan beat,  
Forty-one bullets in Amadou Diallo 'cause racists own the streets.

Chorus:  
Parents of white children, please hear my plea.  
If they were killing your children, I know you'd be standing here with me.

Mothers burying children, Lord, you know it ain't right.  
We've got to teach our babies, "Watch your step 'cause you ain't white."  
Or maybe they're female or maybe they're gay -  
Your children, my children, getting hurt bad every day.

Chorus:  
Parents everywhere, please hear my plea.  
They're killing our children, and I need you.  
You know I need you, yes, I need you!  
I need you right up here with me!

# REMEMBER MARTIN KING

by Eric Levine © 1995 (updated 2001)

Vocal : Solo by Eric  
with backup by The Chorus  
12-String Guitar: Eric

Martin King, Martin King, whenever Freedom rings,  
I remember - Martin King.  
Jesus Christ and Gandhi, too, read their stories through and through.  
I remember - Martin King.  
Young preacher came home from school to teach the golden rule.  
He really believed it through and through.  
They asked him if he'd work in the bus boycott; he knew that it was his job.  
He understood just what to do.

Chorus:

Love alone is sentiment; power alone is cruel;  
But if you put them both together, then you have a working tool.  
Do not give in to that backlash. Let the sound of Freedom ring  
Because the year two thousand's come and gone.\*  
Remember Martin King.

Martin King, Martin King, one day a bullet it did ring.  
I remember. I was ten years old.  
Watching TV, a bulletin came. Next day many went insane  
At the death of Martin King.  
He knew just what was going on. He could see it all the time.  
He was fearless at 39  
'Cause he knew you can't go backwards, and you know neither can we.  
We're in a mess; we must be free.

Chorus

Martin King, Martin King, he spoke out on everything.  
I remember; I heard it all.  
He said wars across the sea - bad for them and you and me.  
He had integrity, Martin King.  
He always followed conscience, never followed greed.  
Imagine he were here today.  
With homelessness as stocks go wild and exploitation of the child,  
He would scream out "For shame, no way!"

Chorus

When you hear your radio, and you hear that Rush Limbaugh,  
Just remember - Martin King.  
When you hear them tell their lies of bell curves, don't wonder why,  
Just remember - Martin King.  
It's not about memorials; it's about what we do today.  
Politics is a game we have to play.  
So you who study history, read between the lines.  
Non-violent army - one more time (one more time - you know it now)!

Final Chorus - last line is  
Remember - Martin Luther King.

\* The 1995 version of this line was "Because the 60's is the 90's upside down."

# NEVER STAND ALONE

by Heather Lev © 2000

Vocal: Solo by Heather Lev, Guest Vocalist  
with backup by The Chorus  
Guitar: Heather Lev, Guest Instrumentalist

Chorus:

For there's battles to be won, songs to be sung  
And a hundred thousand seeds to be sown,  
And you never have to stand, never have to stand -  
And you never have to stand alone.

You can cry with grief, sigh for relief,  
Nobody may hear your moan.  
You can complain or dance out in the rain,  
And you never have to stand alone.

Chorus

The powers that be never set you free  
And it seems that they have a heart of stone,  
But a rock can be moved, laws disproved,  
And you never have to stand alone.

Chorus

So give me your hands, share with me your plans  
Till the seed we have planted is full grown.  
It will flower, it will spring, it can change anything,  
And you never have to stand alone.

Chorus (2 x)

## *DEDICATION*

*We dedicate ...and the Parking Spots Are Nothing But the Best to*



*Agnes "Sis" Cunningham*  
*1909 -*

## *DEDICATION*

*Agnes "Sis" Cunningham lives in New York and sang with The DLA Singers during the 1990's. Sis was born in 1909 in Oklahoma, which is also Woody Guthrie's birthplace. She studied music in college, became a teacher, did cultural organizing with farmers and was a dustbowl refugee along with her late husband, radical journalist Gordon Friesen; one of Sis's many notable songs is "My Oklahoma Home (It Blowed Away)". She and Gordon moved to New York City in the 1940's, where Sis teamed up with Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly, Pete Seeger, Bess Hawes and others in the folk protest group, the Almanac Singers.*

*Sis went on to raise a family through very tough times. She and Gordon were both blacklisted during the McCarthy Era of the 1950's, and Gordon was fired from a good-paying job; there were periods of time when the family needed to be on welfare. But Sis picked herself up and dusted herself off time after time. She and Gordon started Broadside Magazine in 1962 and published the first songs of Phil Ochs, Bob Dylan, Malvina Reynolds, Tom Paxton, Len Chandler, Janis Ian, Reverend Kirkpatrick, Matt Jones and many, many others who would play a key role in the topical music revival of the 1960's. To these bright new faces and voices, Sis and Gordon opened their New York City apartment, which became a "hang-out" and a haven for these artist/activists.*

*And Sis kept on writing and recording despite numerous illnesses. When I asked her in 1990 if she wanted to be a member of The DLA singers, I expected a polite "no," but instead she excitedly said "yes" and sang with us for about 5 years. She recorded "Housecalls," a song about the decline of medical caring, on our first DLA Singers album, IN MOTION.*

*Sis and Gordon's autobiography, Red Dust and BroadSides, was officially released in 1999 (a smaller version had been self-published in 1990, while Gordon was still alive) and is available by name for purchase via the internet - along with many other materials including recordings and history about her life.*

*Thank you, Sis, for all your songs and all your work.  
Thank you for being an inspiration to us and to the entire folk movement.  
Thank you for All You Are.*

*Eric Levine, 2003*

