



Press Contacts:

Jitin Hingorani, 212.560.6609 or hingoranj@wnet.org

Gloria Park, 212.560.2063 or parkg@wnet.org

Pete Seeger's 90th Birthday Celebration from Madison Square Garden: A *Great Performances* special airing on PBS this summer

Legends of folk, rock, and country music gather for a once-in-a-lifetime tribute to the beloved performer

With a career spanning more than half a century, renowned folk artist, political activist, and avid environmentalist, **Pete Seeger**, turned 90 in May of 2009. In honor of the milestone birthday, a multi-generational roster of artists, whose music has been shaped by Seeger's vision, gathered at Madison Square Garden on May 3 to celebrate his lifetime achievement. **Pete Seeger's 90th Birthday Celebration from Madison Square Garden** will premiere in HD on THIRTEEN's *Great Performances* on Thursday, July 30 at 8 p.m. EST (check local listings).

Great Performances is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG – one of America's most prolific and respected public media providers.

Joining Seeger for this extraordinary concert event were more than 40 artists, including **Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp, Arlo Guthrie, Joan Baez, Kris Kristofferson, Richie Havens, Roger McGuinn, Ani DiFranco, Taj Mahal, Ben Harper, Dave Matthews**, and many others who performed songs inspired by Seeger's music and activism. Concert highlights include Seeger leading the audience in a rousing sing-along of "Amazing Grace."

Other classic favorites compelling the enthusiastic audience to join in were “We Shall Overcome” and “This Land Is Your Land.”

Born to a large family of musicians, young Peter first learned to play the ukulele, graduating to the five-string banjo in the mid-1930s, ultimately mastering the instrument and, in the process, galvanizing the American folk music movement. A pioneer of protest music, Seeger’s anti-Vietnam War songs, including the now famous “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” and “Turn, Turn, Turn,” as well his interpretation of the Civil Rights anthem, “We Shall Overcome,” garnered mainstream attention in the 1960’s, revitalizing the genre and paving the way for countless other activist musicians—including **Bob Dylan**—to achieve widespread acclaim.

The concert was a benefit for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, a non-profit, environmental organization created by Seeger to bring awareness to the importance of protecting the Hudson River and our other natural resources.

In February 2008, THIRTEEN co-produced and broadcast the first and only authorized biography of Seeger, *American Masters: Pete Seeger: The Power of Song*. The film was awarded a Primetime Emmy.

Great Performances is funded by the Irene Diamond Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, public television viewers, and PBS. For **Great Performances**, Bill O’Donnell is series producer; David Horn is executive producer.

Visit **Great Performances Online** at www.pbs.org/gperf for additional information about this and other programs.

About WNET.ORG

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