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'WOODSTOCK OUTSIDE THE BOX OF HISTORY', DECLARES ARLO GUTHRIE

On the 40th anniversary of the most iconic live musical event in history, one of its most famous performers tells why Woodstock was so important then and still means something to a young generation four decades on.

London August 2009: Folk musician Arlo Guthrie is famous for many things: being the son of legendary singer/songwriter Woody Guthrie; writing such classic songs as 'Coming Into Los Angeles' and the 18-minute 'Alice's Restaurant Massacree'; and for telling the 500,000-strong crowd at Woodstock Music and Art Fair that they had shut down the New York State Thruway, 'Dig it, man!'

On its 40th anniversary, Arlo has written at length on that most iconic of festivals in a forthcoming multimedia boxset *Woodstock Experience*, published August 15, 2009, by Genesis Publications. In it he explains that those who were there knew they were experiencing a significant moment in history.

ARLO GUTHRIE: It's very rare that you're in an historic moment and you know that you're in it. It's even more rare that you're in an historic moment, that you know is historic, and you're having fun. Woodstock was one of those historic moments. Actually, it was outside the box of history. Even though people will say that it's a legend, that we're making this up, we knew at the time that we were living in a mythic moment, something beyond the academic view of everyday and ordinary things.

In a characteristically humorous Foreword, and with insightful comments throughout *Woodstock Experience*, he describes the festival as a sign that the numbers of disaffected youth had reached a critical mass; that, in a climate of rioting, war, violence and fear, young people finally showed their selves ready to take control of their futures.

ARLO GUTHRIE: The civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, ban the bomb, clean the water, burn the lingerie... Woodstock was another link in the chain of social upheaval. It was, in part, a celebration of those times. The people at Woodstock had already discovered, through their own experience, that people in government and at the heads of their households were crazy. These people had brought us to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe, the destructive power of which was unprecedented. You had a generation of people doubting the sanity of people in positions of authority, and for good reason... if you knew that the guy driving the train was out of his freaking mind, you'd get off of the train, wouldn't you?

He also draws a comparison between the young generation of 2009, and that of 40 years ago.

ARLO GUTHRIE: *I get at least a dozen letters everyday saying, 'I wish I had been around in those days.' There's a connection between our generation and young kids today who have the same sneaking suspicion that a lot of their elders are actually quite insane. Witness the last eight years, since 2001. It doesn't take much for a young person to assimilate the insanity of what's going on in the world and decide that this is not a good thing. So you're going to want to do something different. And when was the last time anybody did anything different? It was the Sixties. That's what they're looking back to. But you will have your own moment in time and that moment in time depends on you taking responsibility for yourself and for your friends.*

Arlo Guthrie is one of nearly 70 contributors who share their personal memories in *Woodstock Experience*, the most definitive oral history of the event yet produced. Others include David Crosby, John Sebastian, Graham Nash, Joe Cocker, The Band and Ravi Shankar, as well as audience members, photographers, artists and Woodstock producers Artie Kornfeld and Joel Rosenman. Woodstock's Executive Producer, Michael Lang, is also the project's Executive Editor and, along with his own story, provides letters, notes, contracts and more from his personal archive.

These stories and never-before-seen artefacts form Volume One of the multimedia boxset; Volume Two features the previously unpublished photographs of the late Dan Garson taken as a 17-year old student, and providing a unique view of the festival. In addition there are loose-leaf essays, a specially pressed vinyl record featuring Santana and Jefferson Airplane live at Woodstock, a facsimile hand-drawn site map, a fine art print by the legendary Sixties artist Peter Max, and an original festival ticket with every set. The whole collection is housed in a three-part folding box featuring exclusive screen-printed art by leading artist and designer Shepard Fairey – the man behind the Barack Obama 'Hope' posters.

Only 1,000 copies of *Woodstock Experience* are available, each one signed by Michael Lang and Arlo Guthrie.

Editor's Notes

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Woodstock Experience signed by Michael Lang and Arlo Guthrie, the limited edition box set of 1,000 copies, is available only through Genesis Publications: www.genesis-publications.com; tel: +44(0)1483 540970; price: £395.

About Genesis Publications

In 1974, Brian Roylance founded Genesis Publications with a vision to create limited edition books true to the arts of printing and craftsmanship, and to establish a community shared by authors and readers. In 1995, he found himself explaining the nature of fine bound books in an interview with the New York Times. 'I suppose to some extent I am stuck in a time warp. I don't know of many people who go to this much trouble to produce a book anymore. But I think there is a future for it.' Today, Genesis is headed by Brian's son and daughter and continues to flourish, producing hand-signed, limited-edition volumes with outstanding authors that have recently included musicians such as Brian Wilson and The Rolling Stones, visual artists such as Shepard Fairey and Sir Peter Blake, and contributing writers such as Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg. Over 35 years publishing, Genesis' subscribers are to be found in over 50 countries across the globe. *Woodstock Experience* is a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Woodstock Music & Arts Fair, published this August, 2009.

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